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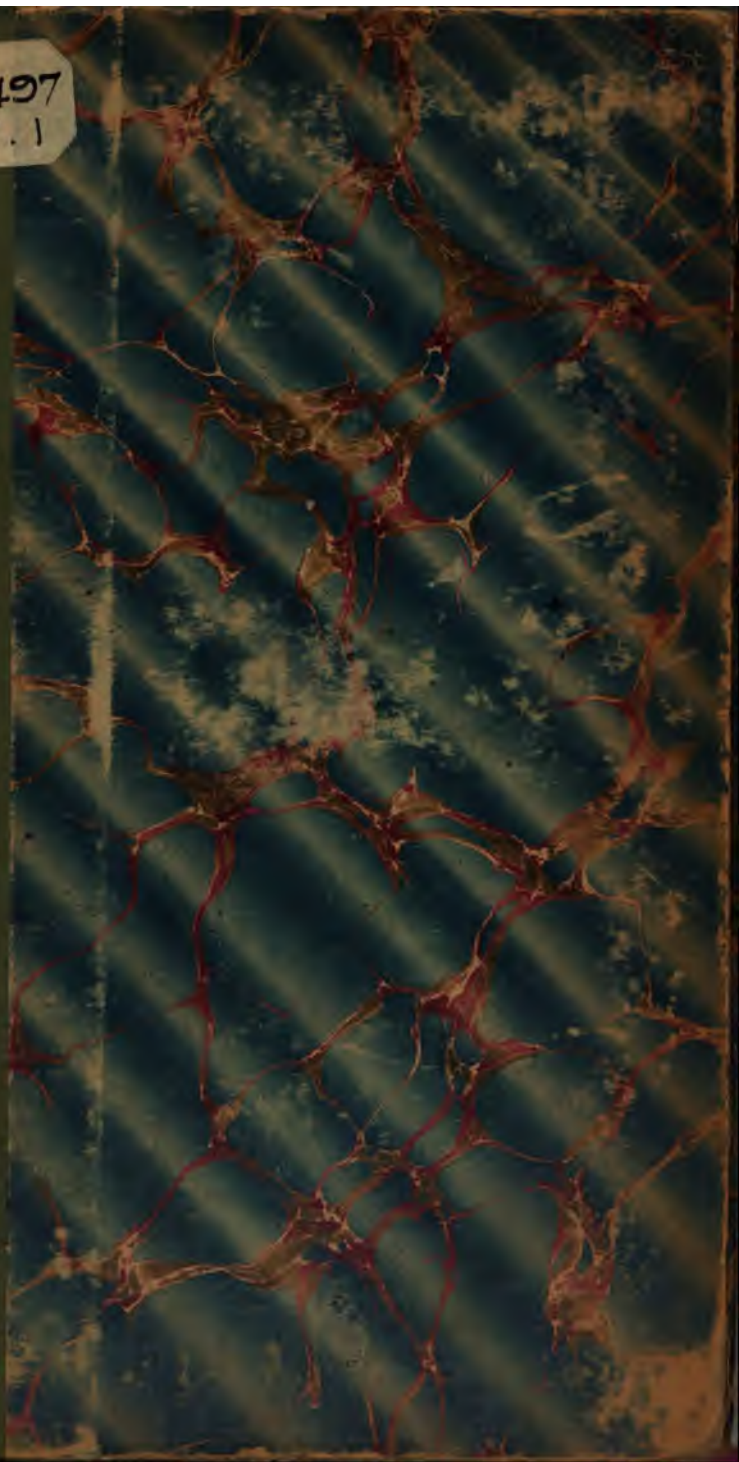
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No. 44.

# *A Brace of Partridges*

A Farcical Comedy in Three Acts

BY

ROBERT GANTHONY

Author of "*The Ring Master*," produced at the Lyric Theatre, etc., "*Random Recollections*," "*Practical Ventriloquism*," "*Bunkum Entertainments*," "*The Spoffins' Sketches*," etc., etc.

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# A BRACE OF PARTRIDGES

A FARCICAL COMEDY IN THREE ACTS.

BY

ROBERT GANTHONY

*Author of "The Ring Master," produced at the Lyric Theatre, etc., "Random Recollections," "Practical Ventriloquism," "Bunkum Entertainments," "The Spoffins' Sketches," etc., etc.*

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## BRACE OF PARTRIDGES.

*Produced at the Royal County Theatre, Kingston-on-Thames, 15th Nov., 1897, with the following cast:*

LORD WALLERTON .....	Mr. G. Blake.
COL. RACKETT .....	Mr. W. Kean.
HON. A. PARTRIDGE }	
ALF. PARTRIDGE }	Mr. H. Reeves Smith.
STUBBS .....	Mr. F. Everill.
SNAP .....	Mr. C. Thornbury.
TOM RUSHTON .....	Mr. Duncan Tovey.
SPIFFINS .....	Mr. L. Thomson.
JAMES .....	Mr. P. Darwen.
CRAG .....	Mr. F. Allen.
LADY WALLERTON .....	Mrs. Chas. Maltby.
EVANGELINE VAN BOCK .....	Miss M. Allestree.
PEGGY STUBBS .....	Miss A. L. Aumonier.

*Done subsequently at the Strand Theatre, London, on Feb. 10th, 1898, with the following cast:*

LORD WALLERTON .....	Mr. Walter Everard.
COL. RACKETT .....	Mr. Sidney Paxton.
HON. A. PARTRIDGE }	
ALF. PARTRIDGE }	Mr. H. Reeves Smith.
STUBBS .....	Mr. F. Everill.
SNAP .....	Mr. C. Thornbury.
TOM RUSHTON .....	Mr. Duncan Tovey.
SPIFFINS .....	Mr. Geo. Shelton.
JAMES .....	Mr. Gordon Tomkins.
CRAG .....	
LADY WALLERTON .....	Miss Ada Branson.
EVANGELINE VAN BOCK .....	Miss Henrietta Watson.
PEGGY STUBBS .....	Miss A. L. Aumonier.

Postman, Butcher, Villagers, etc.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD WALLERTON.....An impecunious nobleman  
COLONEL RACKETT (of Chicago).....Guardian to Evangeline.  
HON. ARTHUR PARTRIDGE } The "Brace" Cousins five times  
ALFRED PARTRIDGE } removed.  
STUBBS.....Landlord of the "Red Lion" Shrove.  
SNAP.....Bailiff.  
TOM RUSHTON.....Livery Stable lad.  
SPIFFINS.....A City waiter.  
JAMES.....Butler to Lord Wallerton.  
CRAG.....Shrove's oldest inhabitant.  
LADY WALLERTON.....Arthur's stepmother.  
EVANGELINE.....A Californian Heiress.  
PEGGY STUBBS.....Landlord's daughter.  
Postman, Butcher, and Villagers, etc.

ACT I. The Red Lion, Shrove Monday, 21st June.

ACT II. Lord Wallerton's Town House, Tuesday, 22d June.

ACT III. The "Red Lion" Shrove, Wednesday, 23d June.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR COSTUME AND MAKE UP.

### LORD WALLERTON.

ACT I. Knicker Cycling Suit, or trouser clips. ACT II. Frock Coat, last entrance, Evening Dress. ACT III. Morning Coat, silk hat, gloves. In make up an old swell.

### COLONEL.

ACT II. Frock Coat or Evening Dress. ACT III. Morning Coat, silk hat, etc. Make up American.

### ARTHUR.

ACT I. Blue serge suit, straw hat, blue and white tied bow to turn by being attached to a piece of elastic, and worn with a lay down collar. The reverse side being red it only requires pulling out, turning and replacing to be another bow. In ACT III. the same except that he wears the pants Alfred wore in ACT II.

Arthur is grave and dignified in manner, seldom jokes, smiles or smokes.

## COSTUME AND MAKE UP.

### ALFRED.

ACT I. Blue serge suit. Brown covert coat. ACT II. Light suit. ACT III. The light vest and jacket he wore in ACT II., but blue serge pants, a check cap, red tie, eyeglass, he is near-sighted, always grinning, always flippant and trying to be funny, undignified in manner, restless and always smoking.

*N.B. It is the absence of "make up" which distinguishes this Play from all previous duality Plays. The actor who personates both relies upon a change of manner, a grinning face and serious one, a grave manner and a flippant one, and, although they dress alike, Alfred wears Arthur's clothes, and in the last act they divide a suit between them the identity is never confused.*

### STUBBS.

ACT I. Brown Shooting Coat, cord breeches, and riding gaiters. ACT III. Black velvet coat and vest, breeches and gaiters, rosette in coat. White hair, and whiskers, healthy complexion, full of heartiness and energy.

### SNAP.

A broken-down lawyer's clerk. In ACT II. got up with gloves, etc., to call on a Lord.

### RUSHTON.

The village bully, a livery stable lad's dress, striped shirt, no collar, cord breeches and brown leggings, braces hanging, looped at back, vest unbuttoned and open in ACT I., collar and tie in ACT III.

### SPIFFINS.

A shabby, greasy, ill-fitting dress suit, white tie. A city waiter enfeebled by late hours, tippling, and unnatural living, brought down into the country where all his characteristics become more pronounced. His face is pale, the bloom having left his cheeks and settled in his nose, he is shaved but for a pair of mangy pointed side-whiskers, his head is partly bald with long streaks of hair drawn across, large gouty shoes, etc. Sleepy and slow in all his movements as a contrast to Stubbs.

### CRAIG.

White hair, bent with age, wears smock white hat.

## COSTUME AND MAKE UP.

7

### LADIES.

#### LADY WALLERTON.

ACT I. Skirt cycling dress. ACT II. House dress, last entrance an evening dinner dress. ACT III. Fashionable walking dress. A warm-hearted handsome woman, doing all she can to help her husband. Should have white hair.

#### EVANGELINE.

ACT III. Handsome walking or dinner dress, first entrance, with cloak, second entrance without, or without hat if evening dress be not worn. ACT III. Smart skirt cycling dress. A bright, smart American "Miss."

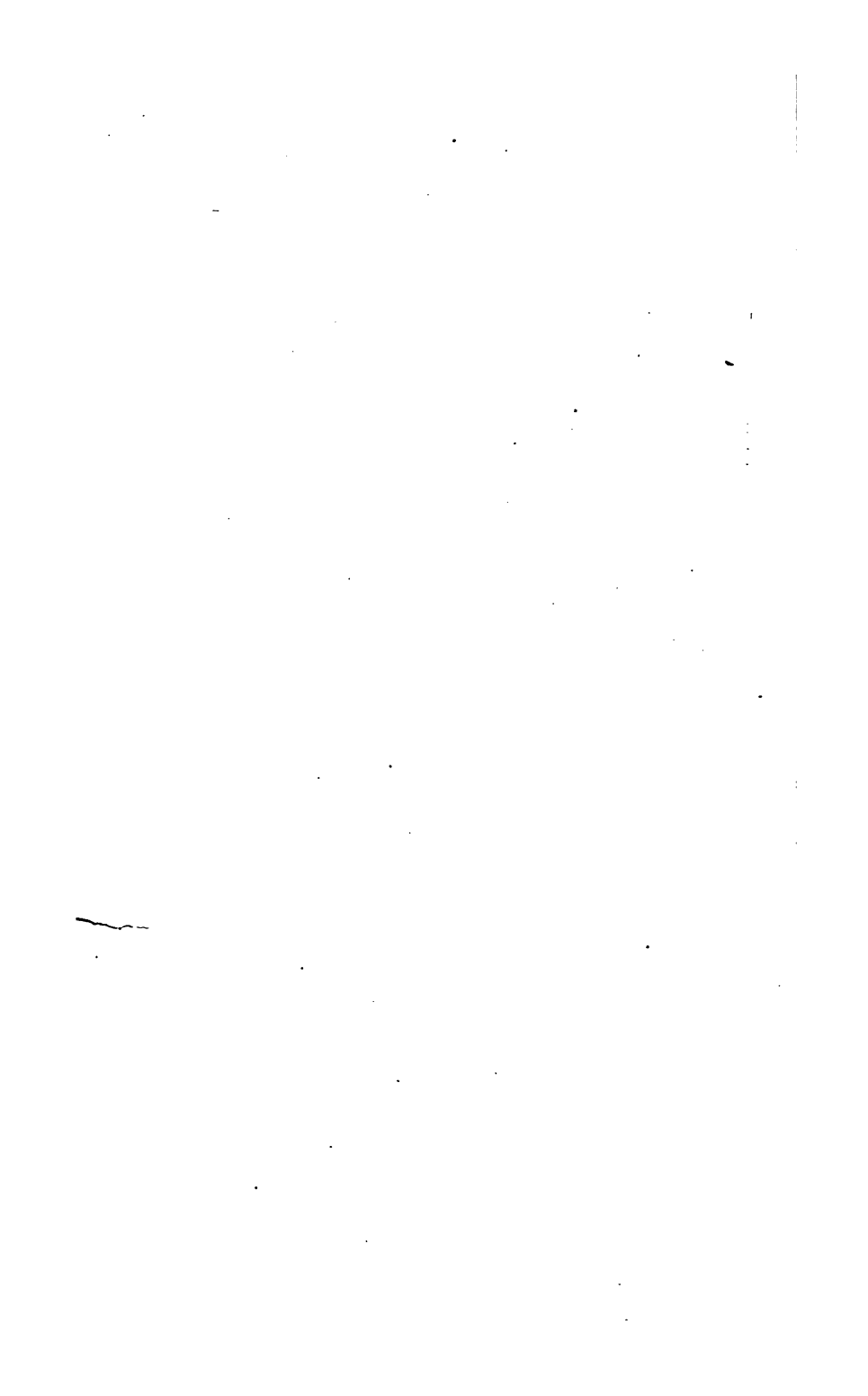
#### PEGGY.

ACT I. Simple print dress, sunbonnet. ACT III. Simple dress first entrance. Wedding dress white and white hat suitable to drive in in summer time, gloves, etc.

Villagers wear smocks, Postman his uniform, Butcher blue apron. A Gamekeeper, couple of cyclists opening of ACT III.

*N.B. If preferred Act II. can be played throughout in morning costume.*

*Pictorial printing can be obtained for "A Brace of Partridges" from Messrs. Waterlow & Son, London Wall, London, or Messrs. David Allen & Sons, Belfast.*



# A BRACE OF PARTRIDGES.

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## ACT I.

SCENE.—Room, "Red Lion," Shrove. Doors L. and L. U. E. to parlor, L. C. to road, window R. C. with blind to pull up. R. of door L. C. a hat-stand, golf clubs, fishing rod, basket, etc. A small bar with beer pump, or cask with faucet or spigot, shelves with bottles, cigar boxes, etc. A slate, with pencil and sponge, hangs top of bar, box of Swedish matches and photo in postal cover on bar. Entrance R. Small table R. C. and chairs; table L. with writing materials, chair. Bicycle up stage. Backing showing pretty country.

Lights half down. Clock strikes seven.

STUBBS. (*calling off*) Spiffins! Spiffins!

*Enter STUBBS R.*

Tut! tut! what's this? Seven o'clock and place all of a muddle. (*calls*) Spiffins! Why don't that waiter of mine open house betimes? (*removes pewter pots and pipes from table R. to bar, calls*) Spiffins! My word, but he do want a lot of calling (*at door*) Hullo, doors unlocked, somebody's been out already. (*opens door, lights up, draws up blind*) Ah, I don't wonder Mr. Partridge waits out there till his breakfast be ready. This place ain't fit for a farm hand, much less for a young gentleman who is an honorable. (*calls*) Spiffins! (*down R.*)

*Enter SPIFFINS sleepily L.*

SPIFFINS. Yes, sir. (*yawns*)

STUB. (*mocking him*) Yes, sir. Thou'rt a wonderful drowsy man, Spiffins.

SPIF. Yes, sir.

STUB. (*briskly*) Yes, sir! Well, blind should be pulled up, and door opened, or early customers will think "Red Lion" have give up business.

SPIF. Yes, sir. (*stifles a yawn*)

STUB. Yes, sir. Well th' must get out of thy city ways, getting up at sunset and going to bed at daybreak, or thou'lt never get well and have rosy cheeks.

SPIF. Yes, sir.

STUB. Yes, sir. (*out of patience*) Dang it, don't stand there saying "Yes, sir," wi' no more life in thee than a weather-washed scarecrow.

SPIF. No, sir.

STUB. No, sir. There's the Honorable Mr. Partridge sitting on bridge waiting for his breakfast.

SPIF. (*grins*)

STUB. Stop thy grinning and get it ready; a young gent can't go fishing on an empty stomach. (SPIFFINS *grins*) Why, what's wrong with thee?

SPIF. Mr. Arthur's in his room, sir.

STUB. Don't tell me, I'll show him thee on bridge. (*goes up to door*) Why, he ain't there! (*comes down R. C.*)

SPIF. Of course he ain't—he's in his room.

STUB. In *his room*?

SPIF. I've just seen him—he wouldn't go out without his boots, and I've only just give 'em to him.

STUB. Thou'rt dreaming, man. Wake thyself and bustle. Lay breakfast here if parlor bain't ready, and let's hear no more such daft talk. Bustle, lad, hustle. (*gets cloth from table L. lays it, SPIFFINS leisurely helping him. PEGGY heard singing off R. She looks in at window; enters C. with flowers; wears print dress, sunbonnet*)

PEG. (*up L. looking about*) Oh! Good-morning, Dad.

STUB. (*laying cloth on table*) Good-morning, Peggy, I thought larks was the only things that sung flying. (*alluding to her having run into room singing. STUBBS leaves SPIFFINS to lay cloth. Everything but table-cloth is brought in on tray*)

PEG. (*hiding flowers, and looking about for ARTHUR*) I wasn't "flying," Dad.

STUB. Very near to it. What's thy hurry, lass? (*pointedly*) Art arter somebody?

PEG. (*confused*) After somebody, Dad?

STUB. (*indicating flowers she holds behind her*) Or wast hurrying to gie thy father these?

PEG. (*brings flowers from behind her and crosses in front of him to table R. C.*) No, Dad, they are for Arthur's—Mr. Partridge's—table (*seeing SPIFFINS taking special interest in what's going on*) Bring me a vase, Spiffins. (*sits on chair L. of table R. C., sorts flowers in her lap*)

SPIF. Yes, Miss. (*exit L. U. E.*)

STUB. (*L. C.*) Decorating lodger's tables is more than thy mother did for 'em when she was alive.

PEG. But Mr. Partridge is not like an ordinary boarder.

STUB. No, lass?

PEG. No, Dad.

STUB. No, thour't right. He's a gentleman, an "honorable" gentleman. His father be a noble lord, his mother a grand lady (*goes to her*) and thou art an innkeeper's daughter, lass, wie no mother to watch over thee. I tell thee, lass, my heart beats sore when I see thee growing so fond of this young aristocrat. (*turns away*)

PEG. (*looking at him imploringly*) But why, Dad? Arthur loves me; he told me so himself.

STUB. (*to her*) Oh! He told thee that, did he? (*half turning away*) A lad's tongue has little conscience when he seeks women's favors.

PEG. What do you mean?

STUB. (*to her*) Did he ask thee to be his wife?

PEG. Oh, Dad, that's understood.

STUB. Aye, understood by thee, child. To thee the world is, as youth and innocence sees it, truthful and beautiful, but when old age bends a man's back and bows his head he don't take such a high view of the world, nor the people in it. There, keep thy flowers; they are no fresher nor sweeter than thou art, and thou mayst be admired—aye, and plucked, too, as they were, if th' lose thy head wi' thy heart. Thou hast no mother now, Peggy (*kisses her forehead, going*) so remember what thy father says to thee, and think on it (*going, turns*), think on't. (*exit L.*)

PEG. I wish Dad wouldn't talk so. He doesn't know Arthur as I do. Can the world be so wicked? Sometimes I think so (*shaking some roses gently*), and when I see flowers dew-laden like these I often imagine in my foolish fashion that the night has been weeping over them for the sins of the day that has passed,



## A BRACE OF PARTRIDGES.

*Enter ARTHUR, blue serge suit, L. U. E.)*

ARTHUR. (L.) Good morning, Peggy. (*opens out handkerchief and puts it in pocket*)

PEG. (*looking up*) Good morning, Arthur.

ART. Now I know who it is that presents me with bouquets as though I were a prima donna.

PEG. Could you not have guessed?

ART. (*coming down*) I did guess, and I see I guessed correctly.

PEG. Are they not lovely?

ART. Yes, awfully jolly. I shall miss being made so much of when I go away.

PEG. (*rises, flowers fall unheeded, those in hand she lays on table*) When you go away, Arthur?

ART. Yes, dear, a man can't spend all his life catching fish. (*she sobs, he turns*) Why what's the matter?

PEG. (*with an effort*) Nothing—only I hadn't thought about you leaving me—us, I mean (*looks down at flowers*)

ART. Neither had I, Peggy—'pon my life I hadn't. (*looks where she is looking and goes to pick up flowers*)

PEG. (*stopping him*) Leave them—they don't matter. Your stay is over, you say?

ART. (*awkwardly*) Yes. You mustn't forget our rambles by the river—

PEG. (*hurriedly*) No. (*goes to bar*)

ART. Our afternoons in the orchard.

PEG. No. (*arranges bar in nervous agitation*)

ART. Our little flirtations.

PEG. No.

ART. Our vows of eternal love and constancy, and all that sort of thing.

PEG. (*turns to him*) If what has passed between us is to be but a *memory*, Arthur, I will forget nothing.

ART. (*cheerfully*) That's right. It has been awfully jolly while it lasted and—I'm deuced sorry it's over—ain't you?

PEG. (*affecting indifference*) No, I'm not sorry—why should I be sorry? It doesn't matter to me. (*sits L. of table, buries her face in her hands*) Oh, Arthur, Arthur. (*sobs slightly*)

ART. I say, Peggy. (*goes to her*) Don't go on like

this. You make me feel such a cad, such a selfish cad, if I have made you care for me.

PEG. (*rises, speaks with dignity, hastily brushing away a tear*) If you have made me care for you? Why do you now doubt, now regret this? What has happened to have changed you so?

ART. (*awkwardly*) I've heard from my people.

PEG. Well?

ART. *They* have reminded me of what I was a fool to have forgotten.

PEG. What was that?

ART. Oh hang it all, Peggy, how can I tell you? (L.)

PEG. Why not? (C.)

ART. Well, you see, it's such a jolly beastly thing for a fellow to tell the girl he's fond of that he's engaged to another girl.

PEG. (*surprised and pained*) You have all this time been engaged to some one else?

ART. I know I've behaved badly, and ought to have told you before. (C.)

PEG. Is she—pretty?

ART. (*indifferently*) Oh, she's pretty enough.

PEG. (*slowly looking down*) And—you—love—her?

ART. Love her? (*looks at her admiringly, she looks at him interrogatively; their eyes meet*) No.

PEG. (*looking away sadly*) I suppose she is rich?

ART. Yes, and I am wretchedly poor.

PEG. (*in astonishment*) You poor, Arthur?

ART. Yes, my education at Cambridge has only taught me how to spend money, not how to earn it, so I shall be utterly ruined if I disobey them. Be reasonable, Peggy. How can I ask you to share with me a life of misery and degradation?

PEG. I would have accepted all these and more, and made them show you a true girl's devotion, the wealth of a woman's love: but you do not ask this of me. You have amused yourself by killing my life, as you have the birds and fish whose deaths have given you pleasure. Let it be so—your holiday is over—don't stay here any longer. (ARTHUR goes up a little) Go back to your people—their nobility may applaud your conduct. My nature must lack nobility, for it can't comprehend it—good-by. (*crosses him to L.*)

ART. You needn't say good-by. (R.) I'm not obliged to go till to-morrow.

PEG. We will say good-by now, and for ever.

ART. For ever is such a deuce of a while—something might be done.

PEG. Something has been done. (*bitterly*)

ART. What? (*a move down, treading on flower*)

PEG. (*hastily and impulsively*) You've trodden on a rose (*points to flowers*) and crushed it. (*shrug*) That's all. (*going*) Good-by.

ART. Stop. (*she stops*) There's something I wanted to say. (*thinking deeply*)

PEG. (*meaningly*) Have you not said enough?

ART. No, I've just thought of it—(*she is going*)—and if you care for me?

PEG. (*stops, turns*) Well?

ART. (*seriously*), Just now you said you would share with me misery and degradation?

PEG. I said I would share all that and more.

ART. Well (*dubiously*), there isn't much more, but misery and degradation made me think of what there was.

PEG. (*with increasing interest*) Think of what?

ART. Of a shooting-box I have at Fairwood, and a beggarly two hundred a year they can't take from me.

PEG. (*nearer to him*) Well, Arthur?

ART. Well, Peggy, if you thought we could live on that I'd give up my prospects, (*leading her by the waist R. C.*) chuck up my clubs, cards, billiards; do anything to save expense. (*puts her in seat L. of table, sits on table*) I would, indeed. Wear my old clothes, leave off everything—

PEG. Arthur!

ART. —all my extravagances. There is plenty of ground about, and we could keep fowls and a pig, live on eggs and bacon. (*pause, PEGGY looks at him*) In wet weather we could go out at daybreak and gather mushrooms (*PEGGY makes a movement*) Field mushrooms and bacon are not bad. Of course we couldn't get any blackberries till the autumn. (*PEGGY has heard no proposal of marriage, and with her father's lecture in her ears, rises dejectedly and goes C.*) Ah, I thought you'd decline. You see, Peggy, it's easy enough to get married—

PEG. (*under her breath, with suppressed joy*) Married!

ART. —the difficulty is to live afterwards.

PEG. (*going to him, taking his hands*) Dad is better off than people have any idea of, and with his help, (*smiling*) the pig and the fowls, the blackberries and the mushrooms, we ought to manage.

ART. I'd be a good fellow to you if you'd marry me with this outlook; it would be so easy, Peggy.

PEG. Why?

ART. Because I love you.

PEG. I'd marry you if you had nothing, Arthur, because I love you. (*taking rose from floor, a white one*) The rose is not so much injured after all. Accept it is a *gage d'amour*.

ART. What's that?

PEG. Don't quiz my French.

ART. I know, a love token.

PEG. And your people?

ART. My people may go to thunder, I'll marry you *sub rosa*.

PEG. What's that?

ART. Don't quiz my Latin. (*holding rose over her*)

PEG. (*looking up at rose*) I know, "under the rose."

ART. Yes, (*salutes*) for if my people hear of it they will do all they can to separate us. Come (*left arm round her waist*) let's take a turn in the orchard, and discuss our future. (*exeunt R. As he passes out he takes down hat from nail up side of entrance and puts it on as he goes out*)

*Enter SPIFFINS L. U. E., with vase.*

SPIF. This is the best I can do. (*seeing flowers all over floor*) Well, that's a nice place to put the flowers. (*kneels down and puts them into vase*) People never seems to value what they gets for nothing. They would have had to buy these in London (*rises, puts vase on table*) There's a bokay! (*adding a leaf from table*) Another leaf or two and it's a picter. (*looks about*) I wonder where that skyon of the nobility 'ave got to? In Fleet Street a gent orders his grub, and sits patient in his box till you brings it, but 'ere they expects you to go a-chasin' 'em all over the fields to tell 'em breakfast is ready. I'm a waiter, I am, not a blood-hound. (*pause*) He may be

in a hurry to go fishing (*looks at rod*) but it don't look like it. 'Owever, I'll bring in the coffee and the fish, and if he ain't 'ere to heat it 'tain't my fault. (*exit R.*)

*Enter ALFRED L. C. Wears serge suit, but a different tie to ARTHUR, a cap instead of a straw hat, and a brown covert coat. The tie is double colored and is made to turn. ALFRED smokes a cigarette, is alert and larky and always on the grin, in contrast to ARTHUR, who is dignified, sedate, never smokes. ALFRED is near-sighted, wears eye-glass. He has never been to the Inn before. ARTHUR is at home there.*

ALF. (*peeping in*) Thank goodness! Inn open at last! A very cozy one! (*coming in*) And not overcrowded. (*seeing table R. C.*) That's what I like to see—a snow-white tablecloth laid by the hand of some buxom country lass, whose natural, inborn sense of refinement has so tastefully arranged these flowers. (*lifts vase, about to smell them, turns R. and sniffs*) Oh, what a delicious odor of fried fish! There are moments in a man's life when the smell of a little cooking knocks the fragrance of flowers into a cocked hat. (*puts down vase*) I am experiencing one of those moments now (*hand to stomach*) here. Nothing to eat yesterday, and the same thing for breakfast this morning. I've half a mind to order a meal here—they wouldn't ask me for the money before I ate it, and they wouldn't get it afterwards if they did. No, that's swindling, and I won't do that, much as my interior would appreciate it. Rather than satisfy the cravings of hunger at the expense of my self-respect, I would take a further reef in my trousers—no, not here. I will retire to some secluded nook, where the operation will shock no one and my good resolutions will not be broken, as they will be if I stay here and breathe these fascinating odors. (*going off L. C.*)

*Enter SPIFFINS with tray R., on which is coffee, fish under a cover,*

SPIFF. (*following him with tray*) Hi! sir, don't go away. (*returns*)

*Re-enter ALFRED cautiously.*

ALF. I beg pardon.

SPIFF. Your breakfast is quite ready, sir.

ALF. (*amused*) Did you say *my* breakfast? (*approaches table, examines breakfast*)

SPIF. Yes, sir, your breakfast. I laid it 'ere, sir, 'cause parlor ain't quite ready. (*raising cover*) Your fish, sir. (*passes behind ALFRED to C.*)

ALF. (*looking at fish through eye-glass*) What a lovely aroma!

SPIF. (L.) You called it a perch, yesterday, sir.

ALF. The devil I did!

SPIF. Ain't much use catching 'em if you don't eat 'em.

ALF. (*removing covert coat and handing to SPIFFINS, but not removing cap*) Your argument and the aroma convince me (*sits, eats, catching SPIFFINS watching him*) I say, cherry blossom, you don't look like a product of the country?

SPIF. (C.) No, sir; merely down ere for my 'ealth, sir. (*hangs coat on hat stand*)

ALF. (*eating*) Ah!

SPIF. (*returning to C. from hat stand*) My native 'eath, as the poet says, is Cary Street.

ALF. London.

SPIF. Yes, sir, back of the Law Courts—

ALF. (*drops knife and fork in terror*)

SPIF. You looks alarmed, sir.

ALF. Alarmed? I should think so. Do you know, that ever since Saturday the very mention of the word "law" puts me in a cold perspiration, and when coupled with the word *caught* it positively terrifies me.

SPIF. Lor, sir.

ALF. There you are again.

SPIF. It ain't the same *law*, sir.

ALF. No, it wasn't the same "caught" but both are as suggestively unpleasant, at least till I see my friend Jack Cletthedge, when he will soon put matters right.

SPIF. The young gent 'ave just gone to South Africa, sir.

ALF. What! Gone to South Africa?

SPIF. Yes, sir.

ALF. 'Pon my life, I'm in a nice pickle—just through helping a pal. It's fearful, you know. If my father, Sir Wallerton Partridge, heard of this, out in India, he'd disinherit me. I know what my curry-eating old Dad would

do. There's no help for it—I must dodge Snap till my remittances arrive on Thursday.

SPIF. I shouldn't be frightened, sir.

ALF. No, *you* wouldn't be, but I am. It's me they're after, not you. *You* are probably used to such things, and a writ causes you no more alarm than a coal circular does to a suburban resident.

SPIF. I do 'ope as you treated the gent proper as called to serve it.

ALF. No, I didn't. I unfortunately had on a stout pair of boots, and in a moment of valor I did so (*raising foot*) and caused him to retire with a good deal of alacrity.

SPIF. If you did so, (*raising his foot*) it's contempt of Court, and they can arrest you.

ALF. Yes, that's just it, I know they can.

SPIF. Of course they can. I ain't lived all my life near the L——

ALF. Ah !

SPIF. 'Alls of Justice for nothing. (*crossing behind ALFRED to bar he fetches photo, comes down left of him and suddenly gives it him*) This came for you this morning.

ALF. (*recoiling*) It's not a writ, is it ?

SPIF. (*grinning C.*) No, this ain't no writ. It's the parcel from Claude Lorraine Smith's you expected yesterday.

ALF. (*amazed at him*) I expected yesterday ?

SPIF. Yes. I'll open it if you feels frightened of it.

ALF. (*eating*) Yes, you open it.

SPIF. (*opens it, drops cover on chair L. of table*) It's the image of you !

ALF. It doesn't look like an image.

SPIF. (*who is showing perplexity at ALFRED'S talk, etc.*) It ain't your 'abit to take a man up so sharp. To speak more grammatically correct I should have called it a porkrate. (*shows it C.*)

ALF. Oh, a portrait ? (*glancing towards it*) Really, I do see a likeness.

SPIF. You see a very good likeness (*places it on table*) and if I knows anything of females of the opposite sex (*crossing down of ALFRED to R.*) she'll be proud of it. (*exit R.*)

ALF. She'll be proud of it—she ? Who is Sylvia, I

wonder? Barmaid I suppose. (*rises, transfers red rose from vase to right buttonhole*) I will adorn myself in her honor. (*takes up photo*) This is the best likeness I have had taken, and the best of this best likeness is that I haven't had it taken at all. (*regarding it more attentively*) This is very strange. Great Scott! Can it be possible? Where's that address? (*takes up cover from chair*) It's Arthur! I thought so. (*reads*) The Honorable Arthur Partridge Red Lion, Shrove. (*throws cover behind bar*) Oh this is lovely! The idea of coming across Arthur in this out-of-the-way place. This chap is a cousin of mine, five times removed, and if Shap catches him he'll be further removed, and before the mistake's discovered I shall be able to settle. At Cambridge the fellows were always mixing us up; swore they couldn't tell one from the other, and this waiter fellow has evidently done the same thing—and this is Arthur's breakfast—was his breakfast. I see it all, I mean I (*looking at table laughing*) don't see any of it. (*throws photo on table, goes L.*)

*Enter SPIFFINS R. to table.*

SPIF. Can you eat anything more, sir?

ALF. No, (*aside*) but he can. Yes—let me see, how many fish did I catch yesterday.

SPIF. Three, sir. (R.)

ALF. Then cook another, and bring some more bread, butter, coffee—in fact another breakfast (*looks out C*)

SPIF. His fear of the law don't seem to affect his appetite! (*exit R. with breakfast things*)

ALF. (*returning*) I feel like another man after my meal. I mean I feel like myself after another man's meal. If I could only subdue my highly moral nature for a moment I'd get a weed from that waiter on tick. Hullo! (*looking at shelves behind bar*) Cigars! (*vaults up on bar, stands and inspects them*) "La Troboco." (*takes box, opens it*) No, thanks, I prefer tobacco. (*replaces box*) Wonderful how people trust each other in the country! (*reads*) Flor de Cuba Habanna. (*takes down box, helps himself*) Such confidence in human nature is delightful. (*filling pockets*) The implicit trust this landlord puts in his fellow-creatures fills me with cigars—I mean—admiration. (*gets down and when on floor lays box on bar counter*) Hullo! (*seeing slate*) I will not



## A BRACE OF PARTRIDGES.

allow him to suffer (*taking down slate and coming down*) for his belief in the honesty of mankind. (*writing on slate*) Arthur shall pay for them. (*writes*) The Honorable Arthur Partridge ten Flor de Cuba cigars, and a (*looking at it on counter*) box of Swedish matches. A less conscientious nature would have said nothing about the matches. (*lays down slate on bar, with matches lights a cigar, comes down*) This is a nice business about Jack Cletthedge going to South Africa. He's been called away suddenly and forgotten all about it. What the deuce shall I do? (*sees writing table L.*) I know. I'll write a line to his Guvnor and take it up to the Hall. (*sits at table with writing materials which has put the idea in his head. Looking at almanac*) Twenty-first June. (*takes sheet of paper*)

*Enter PEGGY R. singing, removes bonnet at glass R. and hangs it up on peg near door R.*

ALF. (*aside*) Hullo, here's the "She" the waiter spoke about. (*writes*) Twenty-first of June. Dear sir—

PEG. (*seeing ARTHUR as she supposes*) You naughty boy—

ALF. (*writing*) You naughty boy. (*during laugh takes another sheet of paper, writes*) Twenty-first of June.

PEG. (*going towards him*) This is what you call going for a stroll to think matters over?

ALF. Eh? (*aside*) Here's a lark! She takes me for Arthur!

PEG. (C.) You just got rid of me that you might get back quicker to your breakfast. I shall give you a kiss to punish you.

ALF. (*chuckling*) Really, I don't deserve such punishment.

PEG. You do and I shall not let you off. (*behind his chair, kisses him*)

ALF. Do you mind doing that again?

PEG. (*going R.*) Why, I declare you're smoking. I never noticed you smoked before.

ALF. Oh, didn't you?

PEG. (*closing cigar box*) You should have put away the box.

ALF. (*aside*) I put away the breakfast quick enough.

PEG. Strangers coming in might take the cigars, and say nothing about it.

ALF. Are there wretches so lost to all sense of honor?

PEG. Plenty of them. (*at slate*) But, darling, (*coming down c. and showing him what he had written*) you needn't have done this.

ALF. (*looking round from letter*) What?

PEG. (*indicating*) This.

ALF. Oh, I'm rather punctilious about trifles.

PEG. (*holding up sponge in right hand*) I shall wipe it off—may I?

ALF. It makes no difference to me. (*coaxingly*) I think I should let your Arthur do that.

PEG. (*wipes it off*) There! (*lays slate on table R. C.*)

ALF. Now Arthur only owes for the breakfast (*a chuckle*)

PEG. (*hearing him takes step down R. C., turns, sees rose in his coat*) I don't think that is kind of you.

ALF. What?

PEG. (*touching rose*) This. (*takes it out*)

ALF. But I wore it especially to please you.

PEG. (*leaving his side*) You ought to have known that wearing a red rose when I gave you a white one does not please me. (*throws rose away*)

ALF. Yes, I ought to have known that. (*writes*) I write to inform you that—

PEG. (*seeing photo on table, suddenly and joyously*) It's come! (*takes up photo and admires it*)

ALF. (*writing*) "It's come,"—damnation!

PEG. Eh?

ALF. (*turning*) I mean it came this morning. It's the parcel I believe I expected yesterday. (*writing*) Yours truly, Alfred Partridge. (*aside*)

PEG. (*comparing him with photo*) It's more like you than you seem like yourself this morning.

ALF. (*aside*) And yet they say love is blind. (*addresses envelope*)

PEG. Your face looks stouter.

ALF. It would; I have just had breakfast. (*puts letter in envelope*)

PEG. Of course, dear, I know it's your photo, and that you are yourself. (*crosses him to L.*) I'll show it to Dad, and hear what he thinks.

ALF. (*rises, crosses R., moistening envelope, which*

*he keeps before his face as she looks directly at him*) A good idea.

PEG. (*going to him, meaningly*) I have a little secret to tell him also.

ALF. Mayn't I hear it? (C.)

PEG. You know it. (L. C.)

ALF. Do I?

PEG. Yes.

ALF. Is it something that happened yesterday?

PEG. No, this morning, (*emphasizing with wave of finger*) here—not an hour ago—pretending to look as if you didn't know.

ALF. Oh—of course—yes, now I know—yes—you mean what happened (*imitating her*) here—this morning, not an hour ago?

PEG. What you said has made me the happiest girl on earth.

ALF. I'm glad of that.

PEG. And it will do the same thing for Dad. (*runs off L.*)

ALF. Oh, will it? (*brings cigar from behind him, puts it in mouth, eye-glass in eye, smokes and looks after her*) If what I didn't say is going to make her father a happy girl, I'd like to know what it was. Arthur has been talking treacle to that innocent maiden and kissing her. I don't understand how fellows can do such things. To preserve an unspotted reputation has been the pride of my life. (*change from the moral flight*) I'd better clear out now before that waiter presents his bill. (*takes down coat from stand*) I'd almost forgotten old Snap. (*looks out*) Road seems to be clear, so I'll go up and leave this note at the Hall. The old boy lives by the river, and it will be some solace to me in my present impecunious position to be near a bank, if it's only a river bank. (*exit L. C.*)

*Enter SPIFFINS R., with second breakfast.*

SPIF. Gone to get a appetite for breakfast number two, and been smoking in the interlude. (*puts slate in its place*) That's a noo thing for him, but I suppose when a lover is consumed with a burning passion, he must smoke. The torch of Hyam must be kept kindled, as the poet says. (*looks out L. C., coming down to table*) Torch of Hyam! If I'd a knowed what it was to bring up

eleven children on waiter's tips I wouldn't have burnt my fingers with no torch of Hyam, I know that. (*approaches table, starts back as he sees ARTHUR entering R.*)

*Enter ARTHUR, R. ARTHUR leisurely hangs up hat up of door R. SPIFFINS stares at him, then looks off C., suggesting wonderment as to how he could have got round so quickly. ARTHUR sits quietly at table; SPIFFINS, half frightened to go near him, stands C.*

• ART. I was afraid I was late, Spiffins. (*pours out coffee, etc.*)

SPIF. (*pause*) N-no, sir.

ART. I had to go for a stroll to get an appetite.

SPIF. Not much of a one, sir. (*grins*)

ART. Much of an appetite?

SPIF. No, sir, stroll, sir. (*removes cover, goes L. C. aside*) I shouldn't have thought there was anything wrong with his appetite.

ART. (*indicating fish as he helps himself*) What I caught yesterday?

SPIF. Yes, sir, the *aroma*. (C.)

ART. Aroma? Yes, I noticed it as I entered. I wish people wouldn't smoke till I have finished breakfast.

SPIF. (*aside*) Difficult to know when he really have finished. (*laughs*)

ART. Has that parcel come yet? (*eating*)

SPIF. (*after a stare*) Of course it are, if you means the porkrate. (*grins*)

ART. (*annoyed*) Stop that idiotic grin. (SPIFFINS stops) Where is it?

SPIF. Miss Peggy 'ave it, sir.

ART. Who opened it?

SPIF. (*pauses in amazement, stares*) Who, sir? Why, me, sir.

ART. It's like your impertinence.

SPIF. You said open it.

ART. I did?

SPIF. Yes, sir. I shouldn't 'ave taken such a liberty if you 'adn't told me.

ART. I haven't the least recollection of saying anything of the sort.

SPIF. Miss Peggy understood as how it was for her.

ART. That's another matter—why didn't you say so?

SPIF. (*passes behind ARTHUR, touching his own head*)

*in indication of ARTHUR'S madness. Turns, smothering his laughter*) Would you like another breakfast after this one? (*stopping R. at entrance*)

ART. No, of course not. (*exit SPIFFINS, exploding with laughter*) What is the matter with Spiffins this morning? (*eats*)

*Enter PEGGY L. with portrait.*

PEG. Eating again, Arthur? (C.)

ART. That's a nice question!

PEG. (*sitting on chair L. of table R. C.*) I thought you'd finished when I saw you smoking.

ART. Smoking darling, I haven't been smoking. I never smoke.

PEG. (*shaking finger at him*) Arthur!

ART. Really, Peggy.

PEG. And you said you were going to give up all extravagancies. (*rises, puts right hand on his shoulder*) But I forgive you for you are wearing my flower, I see.

ART. Could I wear any other? (*as she looks at him, wondering why he can say such things her hand holding portrait rests on table*) Hullo! My portrait?

PEG. (*leaving him and jestingly clasping it to her breast*) No, mine now.

ART. (*a little piqued*) You might have allowed me to give it to you?

PEG. I thought you did give it me.

ART. Yes, it was for you, certainly.

PEG. Dad thinks it a splendid likeness, and you are like it after all. (*shows it; he takes it*)

ART. It's not bad. (*returns it, rises*) By Jove, I must be off. (*gets hat*)

PEG. Fishing?

ART. No, to London. You see the Bishop's Registry at Doctors Commons closes at 4 o'clock, and we shall require a license.

PEG. Go to-morrow, Arthur. (*clinging to his arm R. C.*)

ART. (*taking her up to door C.*) I must go to-day, or we can't be married on Wednesday. Delays are dangerous, for until we are man and wife I should dread what my people would do to separate us.

PEG. Very well.

ART. Now don't fret, Peg, I've seen your father, and

you'll have his love and mine whatever my people may do. Keep a brave heart; all will come right, you see if it doesn't. (*kiss and exit*)

PEG. Good-by, Arthur (*at C. waves adieu, comes down L.*) If Arthur hadn't been true to me I should have believed in nothing (*regards photo L. C.*) I will make you a good wife, and try and be a lady for your sake. (*kisses photo*)

*Enter* RUSHTON R., *goes to her softly, puts his arm round her waist, grins till his gaze falls on photo. She, looking from the photo of the man she loves to him, she dislikes, crosses him to R. C. with a cry of disgust.*

PEG. Oh! how you startled me! (*puts away photo*)

RUSH. Did I? (*sitting at table R. C. with all the airs of a customer*) Then gie me half a pint of mild.

PEG. (*annoyed with him*) Yes, Mr. Rushton (*draws ale*)

RUSH. Mister Rushton? It used to be Tom, in the old days.

PEG. (*drawing ale*) We were children in the old days.

RUSH. Tain't 'cause we've growd up that makes you so proud and distant, it's 'cause that young swell have been taken notice of you.

PEG. (*banging mug down on table*) Bitter. (*returns to bar*)

RUSH. Tain't what I asked for, but it's what you've given me latterly, bitter thoughts, bitter ale, bitter everything, you make my whole life bitter.

PEG. I'm very sorry, Mr. Rushton. (*down R.*)

RUSH. Of course you are Miss Peggy Stubbs, if so be that's your name. You was sorry for me when you was a kissing that picture, wasn't you? Arter leading me on to think as you'd a been Mrs. Rushton.

PEG. (*R. of table*) I led you on? (*busies herself at bar*)

RUSH. Yes (*turning to her*) led me on—wie smiles, and winks, and noddings, as I sat here drinking till I pretty nigh made myself sick wie stuff. Didn't my old mother have you to tea, and get a making little wool boots wie fancy-colored ribbons in 'em, and long frocks,

to let you know as 'ow the family was for the match? Such things ain't no use to a bachelor, so I ask you for the last time if you'll marry me, Peggy Stubbs?

PEG. I don't want to hurt your feelings—and I appreciate the compliment.

RUSH. (*rising, going C.*) That's 'nough. No swell's talk. You won't have me. Well, I hope you'll be happy, but mind, there's many a wench has come to grief wie aristocrats, what might 'ave married, and lived respectable wie one of her own sort.

PEG. (*coming from bar to R.*) You have no right to speak to me like this, Tom Rushton.

RUSH. (*angrier*) You'd no right to encourage me, making me think as 'ow a 'appy marriage would 'ave united our livery stables and osses wie the Red Lion, and then throw me over when he come along, but you won't marry 'im, for I've found out who he be and I've wrote to his people.

PEG. You have dared to write to Lord and Lady Wallerton?

RUSH. Yes, and I've dared to tell 'em about his fishing, and the kind of fish he were after—fishes wie winks and cajowleries what catches men, and live on land, and serves four ale to villagers.

PEG. (*angry*) You'll make a nice husband when you marry.

RUSH. I'll make a better one than your swell arter I a dumped him in river, and I'll do it next-time I catches un there.

PEG. I shall tell him what you say.

RUSH. Maybe I'll do it afore you gets the chance, Miss Peggy Stubbs (*goes, returns*) there be coppers for the beer Miss Peggy Stubbs (*bangs coppers on table, goes and returns*) and good-day to you, Miss Peggy Stubbs (*going, then turns*) and—and—be darned to you. (*exit L. C.*)

PEG. And when I was so happy! (*sits sobbing up stage*)

*Enter SPIFFINS R. is about to take up Tray when he sees the coppers. He slips them into his pocket and goes off R. with tray, feeling that some of the delights of the City are being introduced into Shrove; to wit "tipping."*

## A BRACE OF PARTRIDGES.

*Enter STUBBS L. U. E. with a signboard on w  
written " Cyclist's Rest."*

STUBBS. (*cheerily*) Eh, lass, crying? Whast naught to cry about? What ails thee?

PEG. (*wiping her eyes and going to him*) Dad.

STUB. You women folk do cry about nothing that Tom Rushton been bullying thee again? (*nods*) Eh, but I'll break every bone in his back don't stop it. He's had as good a chance to win t'other lads, and if he ain't won thee let him show for thee by letting thee be.

PEG. He says he'll push Arthur in the river.

STUB. (*laughing*) He'd better not try it or he'll get a Doctor to join him to himself, and not a Parson to join him to you as he fancied. Come, dry thy eyes, and look at new signboard (*shows her and hangs it up*) Now whirling chaps can spark lass as takes thy heart's content when th' leaves me Peggy. (*her forehead*) When th' leaves me.

*Enter SNAP L. C. ; stops on seeing kissing*

SNAP. Hem!

STUB. (*turning with his arm round PEGGY*) Snap. It's some time since any of you lawyer chaps in these parts. Come in wie thee—come in.

SNAP. If I ain't interruptin of a love dooet?

STUB. Go on wie thee, it's nobut my daughter

SNAP. (*coming down L.*) Peggy, as used to be Lor' she 'ave growed quite a lady.

STUB. Well I've given her the education of a lady she'll be my lady some day. Draw us two mug of beer. (*PEGGY has been looking proud over her first* *tive title ; becomes subdued when suddenly told of* *beer.*)

PEG. (*moodily*) Yes, Dad.

STUB. It's the old story, I suppose, down he's got somebody? (*waves him to seat L. of table*)

SNAP. (*sits across chair leaning arms on back* *(looks round)*)

STUB. Well, what might he have been doing? (*R. of table*)



SNAP. Backed a bill for a College chum what's left him to pay it.

STUB. You didn't expect to meet him at Shrove ?

SNAP. Yes, 'cause covey what drew bill is Mr. John Cletthedge.

STUB. Of the Hall ?

SNAP. Yes, and my chap would be sure to come down here to have it out with him. So I thought I'd give myself a hairing in the country and see old Shrove again at the Guv'nor's expense. (*PEGGY comes down, places mugs on table and stands R. of STUBBS.*)

STUB. (*drinking to him*) Aye.

SNAP. (*drinking*) Here's hi tidly. (*drinks*) Have there been any stranger here to-day ?

STUB. To-day ?

SNAP. You know if he patronized you as he ain't got no money.

STUB. There has been nobody of that sort here to-day, has there, Peggy ?

PEG. No, Dad.

SNAP. You're quite sure, Miss ?

PEG. I have seen everybody since the house was opened ; how could I make a mistake ?

SNAP. Any one staying here ?

STUB. Yes, but he ain't your man, Mr. Snap. He's engaged to marry my Peggy.

SNAP. Oh ! 'Ow long might he 'ave been so ?

PEG. (*R. of table, puts hand on his shoulder and speaks in her fathers ear*) I wouldn't answer such questions, Dad.

STUB. (*putting her hand on his shoulder*) What do it matter, Peggy ? These lawyer chaps are as fond of questions as a horse is fond of carrots. (*to SNAP*) Well, if you must know he proposed this morning.

SNAP. Ah ! Can I see him ?

PEG. No. He's not here. He's gone to London.

SNAP. Oh, really ! Gone to London ! (*rises, goes L. C.*)

STUB. (*rises, goes to C.*) But we can soon put your mind at rest about Mr. Partridge—

SNAP. Partridge !

STUB. (*C.*)—because we happen to have his likeness—give us that portrait, Peggy. (*PEGGY R. C., hands it to STUBBS C., who triumphantly hands it to SNAP. SNAP sees portrait and gives a long whistle*)

STUB. What's the matter ?

SNAP. Nothing. (*quickly*) When's the next train to London ? (L.)

STUBB. Next train to London ? (*going up to look at clock outside*) There won't be another till two o'clock. (*comes down*)

SNAP. I'll keep this (*about to pocket photo*)

PEG. (*crossing to him alarmed*) Certainly not. (*snatches it*)

SNAP. Don't snatch—it's rude. Let's see the name on it ?

PEG. (C.) What for ?

STUB. (*up R. C.*) Let him see it, lass, he'll gather no mushrooms off an oak tree. (*removes mugs from table and puts them on bar*)

PEG. There. (*holds it out lets him see name on photo, etc.*)

SNAP. (*writing in note-book*) Claude Lorraine Smith, London, No. 46785. Thank you, Miss. (*shuts book*) I s'pose you know this young gent's parents, Mr. Stubbs, if he's engaged to Missee here ? (PEGGY as SNAP closes book goes behind bar, STUBBS comes down to SNAP R. C.)

STUB. (R. C.) We ain't exactly intimate, but we know who they are.

SNAP. And who might they be ?

STUB. Lord and Lady Wallerton.

SNAP. Lord and Lady Wallerton—are you sure ?

STUB. Don't seem sure of anything while you're about.

PEG. We are certain Mr. Snap, quite certain.

SNAP. Told me his father was Sir Wallerton Partridge of Bengal. Let's see, Lord Wallerton lives in Berkeley Square, don't he ?

PEG. (*over bar*) Eaton Square.

SNAP. Of course, Eating Square. Right you are. (*Cycle bell off L. indicating signboard*) Your bait seems to have caught something ? (*going door C.*)

STUB. Aye.

SNAP. I'll have a look at the river before I go to the Station.

STUB. You'll find it much the same, Mr. Snap.

SNAP. Them two trout still under the bridge ? (*exit L. C.*)

STUBB. Aye, just where you left them. (*exit L. U. E.*)

## A BRACE OF PARTRIDGES.

Enter LADY WALLERTON and LORD WALLERTON L. C.  
in cycling costume.

LADY. Reginald, that last hill, and the dust, and the wind! It may be fashionable but it's fatiguing *(sits L.)*; some lemonade.

LORD. Lemonade, Gad it's strange what a distaste exercise gives one to stimulants.

PEG. *(coming C. from bar)* Yes, sir.

LORD. Ah! some lemonade—and I'll take a bottle of gingerbeer—

PEG. Yes, sir *(going)*

LORD. And—er *(she returns, he whispers)* a dash of gin in it.

PEG. Yes, sir. *(goes to bar)*

LORD. *(admiring her as she walks away)* And—*(she returns)* don't forget the gin.

PEG. No, sir. *(goes to bar and gets drinks)*

LORD. *(rapturously)* She's devilish good-looking, Amelia!

LADY. That's what bar-maids are engaged for.

LORD. A nice spoken girl?

LADY. She only said "Yes, sir."

LORD. Exactly. Most women talk too much. A neat little figure and did you look into her eyes? *(enthusiastically)*

LADY. *(severely)* Reginald!

LORD. *(apologetically going to her)* My dear, we came down to have a look at her.

LADY. But not to go into ecstasies over her. One would think that beauty was a consideration with us.

LORD. It is with the man who marries it.

LADY. Arthur does nothing of the sort—at least not here. To-morrow Colonel Rackett, as he knows, will expect him to sign the marriage settlement with his

LORD. I know what we have arranged, but if he's a Wallerton he'll chose for himself. *(PEGGY hands drinks first to LADY W. who eyes her critically, and by mistake takes the ginger beer. LORD W. takes the lemonade, looking at PEGGY. He fumbles for money in pocket.)*

LADY W. *(paying)* It's all right, Reginald.

PEG. I'll bring the change. *(exit L. U. E.)*

LADY. This is not lemonade, Reginald, but it's very nice.

LORD. (*with a wry face at lemonade*) This isn't ginger beer, and it's devilish nasty.

LADY. (*rises, gives him her glass, then goes prying about up stage*)

LORD. Ah! (*after tasting ginger beer*) That's better! (*swallows it with murmurs of satisfaction*)

LADY. (*at rod excitedly*) He is staying here.

LORD. (*puts down glasses hurriedly on table, goes up to her*) How do you know? (*taken quickly from here to Curtain*)

LADY. Isn't that the rod you gave him?

LORD. (*examining rod*) He doesn't seem to use it

LADY. Which confirms what that man Rushton said in his letter. "The fish your son is down here after is the daughter of the Red Lion." If we could only bring persuasion and entreaty to bear upon him we might induce him to return with us.

LORD. (*at door*) I believe this half-drowned looking object coming over the bridge is Arthur.

LADY. (*looking*) What can have happened?

LORD. Stand back, dear. He's here. (*they both stand up R.*)

*Enter ALFRED C. in a dismal plight, clothes muddy and wet, no covert coat, weeds on face, coat, etc. A withey with string and small fish dangling about. Cap in hand, soaked. As he shakes cap they start back, and come forward when business is repeated.*

ALF. I had just caught one and landed it on the bank when a brute of a fellow caught me, and landed me in the river. Who should I see when climbing up the side but Snap. I lay as quiet as a lily till he passed and came on here. Now I'm here I don't know what I've come for. There'll be a row about the cigars if not about the breakfast, and there's no knowing what that yokel will do next time he catches me. (*down R.*) It isn't good enough. I'm off! (*turns, sees LORD and LADY WALLER-TON up L.*) Too late. Who are these?

LORD. Good heavens, boy, you're scarcely recognizable (L.)

ALF. (R.) You appear to know me any way.

LADY. (L.) Why do you remain here?

ALF. (*shivering*) I couldn't stop in the river. Where else am I to go to?

LADY. Eaton Square, of course. (*speaks to LORD W.*)

ALF. (*aside*) Arthur's people come after him.

LORD. Now, sir, are you going to return with us?

ALF. Eh? Yes, of course—but I can't run behind your Trike.

LORD. You have your bicycle here. (*pointing to ARTHUR'S.*)

ALF. (*aside*) Arthur's! I'll avoid Snap by road and with them he'll never find me.

LORD. Now, sir.

ALF. (*looks out C.*) I'll just see if the coast is clear.

LORD. - You're not going without paying your bill?

ALF. Oh, they never charge for anything here. (*looks out*) Snap by Jingo! (*He runs down R. C., gets behind them and table kneeling*)

SNAP. (*looking in quickly*) Good-day, Landlord. (*the WALLERTONS turn to SNAP*)

STUB. (*off L. U. E.*) Good-day, Mr. Snap, and I hope you'll catch him. (*exit SNAP. The WALLERTONS turn to ALFRED holding up fingers in rebuke*)

LORD. You seem in a nice mess!

ALF. Yes I'm in a devil of a mess, and if you're going now I think I'll go with you. (*goes to C.*)

*Enter RUSHTON L. C. stick in hand. ALFRED gets R. of table R. C., RUSHTON comes down L. The two begin moving up and down stage, facing each other. MUSIC.*

RUSH. Still hanging about, be yer? Well, if you don't make yourself scarce you'll get summat worse nor a ducking.

Who is this fellow?

ALF. Damned if I know. (*dodging all the time*)

RUSH. But I knows *you*—you're the Honorable Arthur Partridge, and I gives you two minutes to clear out. (*RUSHTON chases ALFRED round table R. C. ALFRED comes down L. whirling LADY WALLERTON round, and again up R. putting chairs in RUSHTON'S way as he pursues him. The second time ALFRED goes up he turns, throws his wet cap at RUSHTON, who turns goes up R. of table, when ALFRED seizes syphon off counter, squirts it in his face, knocks him over C., then escapes with Cycle. WALLERTONS assist scene by*

*calling out and just before ALFRED goes SPIFFINS enters in a straw hat.C. and catches LADY WALLERTON as she faints.)*

## CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

SCENE.—Room at LORD WALLERTON'S Town House.  
*Door L. U. E., window L. C. Entrance to hall R. C. leading off R. Small table down L. C., chairs, sofa down R. C. Hassock at upper end. Looking-glass up R.*

*Enter JAMES R. C., holds ALFRED'S muddy clothes in a pair of brass fire-tongs in one hand, has cigars in the other.*

JAMES. I never did see a gent come home in such a pickle as Mister Arthur did last night. I don't wonder he borrows somebody's else's clothes to go a-fishing in ; by the look of 'em you'd think he'd been swimming after the fish. Well, that wouldn't surprise me, for since he have come home he do seem a bit off his dot, more amooosing in his conversation but decidedly what them lower orders calls balmy on the crumpet.

*Enter LADY WALLERTON, L. U. E. Morning dress, letters in hand.*

LADY WALLERTON. Where are you going, James ?

JAMES. To throw Mister Arthur's fishing suit in the dust-bin, my Lady.

LADY W. What have you in your other hand ?

JAMES. His cigars, my Lady—he wants 'em put in the oven.

LADY W. I was not aware that he could smoke. (*sits R. of table L. C., opens letters*)

JAMES. He says he can't, my lady, till they're dried (*smiling*) told me not to burn 'em as he would do that hisself later on.

LADY W. Is he not down yet ?

JAMES. Down, my lady, he ain't even up.

LADY W. Does he care for neither breakfast nor lunch?

JAMES. Rather, my lady—he's a having of reg'lar picnics and afternoon teas on his bedquilt.

LADY W. Indeed! Take those things away, and please inform him that we require his presence in the drawing-room.

JAMES. Yes, my Lady (*going off L. U. E., almost runs against LORD WALLERTON.*)

*Enter LORD WALLERTON. L. U. E., wears morning coat, carries "Times" in hand.*

LORD WALLERTON. Where the devil are you going—um?

JAMES. To throw Mister Arthur's fishing suit in the dust-bin, my Lord.

LORD W. Fishing suit—um? What the devil do you mean by fishing suit?

LADY W. Oh, do let the man go away with those horrible things, Reginald.

LORD W. Certainly, my dear. James, go away with those horrible things. (*comes down*)

JAMES. Yes, my Lord. (*exit L. U. E.*)

LORD W. Where is Arthur—um?

LADY W. In bed James tells me.

LORD W. Still in bed—at five o'clock—that's not like him—um?

LADY W. Is anything like him that he has said or done since we discovered him at Shrove?

LORD W. Ah! *you* noticed an alteration in him?

LADY W. Of course I noticed it.

LORD W. 'Pon my life, Amelia, I don't understand his behavior, I don't really.

LADY W. I never did, Reginald.

LORD W. He can't be ill because when I passed his room this morning I noticed a strong odor of tobacco.

LADY W. Smoking! That's a habit he appears to have acquired at that public house at Shrove. Even to me, who have seen so little of him, he seems changed. The way he wobbled his bicycle about coming home for instance, made conversation impossible, whereas formerly he rode as straight as a lady.

LORD W. His clothes were wet—sticky saddle, my dear,

LADY W. A sticky saddle should not make him forget that we kept the cycles in the Mews, nor that he should kiss me "Good-night" before rushing off to bed.

LORD W. I am not condoning his behavior, my dear, don't think so. Look at the way he has treated me! I gave him the finest rod and tackle which—hem credit—could procure, and I find him leaving them in a bar parlor, and going after sticklebacks with a bent pin and a thread at the end of a withey.

LADY W. Why was he pursued by that man Snap and that ruffian with a stick?

LORD W. I understood him to say they were having a game of paper chase.

LADY W. A game of fiddlesticks, Reginald. The boy was terrified. It is, I am afraid, something serious, or this Mr. Snap would not have called twice yesterday, before we returned, and left word that he would call again to-day. Of course we are glad to have Arthur back with us, but I do wish that he were more like himself and not so alarmingly irrational. (*knock*) That's Mr. Snap, you may depend upon it.

LORD W. His coming, just as we are expecting the Colonel about this marriage settlement is deuced awkward, I might say devilish inconvenient.

*Enter* JAMES R. C.

JAMES. Here's a person from the Red Lion Shrove to see you, my Lord.

LADY W. (*aside*) The Landlord about his daughter—we might have expected this.

LORD W. (*aside to her*) What are we to do?

LADY W. See him, of course.

LORD W. (*nervously to JAMES*) Has he a stick?

JAMES (*more down C.*) Only parcels, my Lord.

LORD W. Then show him up. (JAMES *bows, exits* R. C.) They are such a rowdy lot down there that I feel a bit nervous.

LADY W. This visit means an action for breach of promise.

LORD W. Do you think so?

LADY W. Certainly *he has some letter* of Arthur's that will be used in evidence—here he is. (*sits R. of table L.*)



*Enter JAMES.*

JAMES. This way, sir.

*Enter SPIFFINS. SPIFFINS wears a small straw hat with blue ribbon, dress suit, ALFRED'S covert coat. Carries bundle of flags, etc. Exit JAMES smothering a smile.)*

LORD W. *(to her)* He doesn't look very ferocious.

LADY W. You are from the Red Lion, Shrove?

SPIF. I am, your worshippess.

LADY W. Of course, you caught me when I fainted—do you remember?

SPIF. Remember? I should think I did, *(with conviction)*

LADY W. Really? *(offended)*

SPIF. —did remember the honor, your Royal Highness *(feeling in pockets; business with parcels)* I've got a letter written by your son, Mr. Arthur Partridge.

LADY W. *(excitedly)* I knew it!

LORD W. And I suppose the ass says that he'll marry the girl?

SPIF. That's what he says, for the letter came un-gummed in the train.

LORD W. *(fiercely)* And on the strength of this letter, you intend to take legal proceedings?

SPIF. *(staring at him in bewilderment)* Me? *(aside)* I never saw a family so frightened of law!

LADY W. *(earnestly)* Do you not intend to go to law with us?

SPIF. What is there to go to law about? *(They both rise)*

LADY W. This relieves us, Mr.—

SPIF. Spiffins.

LADY W. *(smiling pleasantly)* I knew the name began with S. *(sits L.)*

SPIF. And ends with it, your worshippess *(fumbling)* Where is that letter?

LORD W. *(pleasantly)* Never mind the letter, Mr. Spiffins. *(LORD WALLERTON sits R.)*

LADY W. And how is Miss Spiffins?

SPIF. *(surprised)* Hangelina? Doing nicely, thank you.

LADY W. She—er—doesn't feel—er—distressed—that she is not to be married at once?

SPIF. Lor', there's plenty of time afore she need trouble her head about marriage.

LADY W. You think so?

SPIF. Yes, for you see she's like being married, in a measure, having ten of mine to look after.

LADY W. (*surprised*) I understood that she was an only child.

SPIF. I wish she was. There's eleven of 'em, and I shouldn't be surprised—(*fumbles for letter*) Where is that letter?

LADY W. Oh never mind the letter Mr. Spiffins.

LORD W. By the way, do you know a Mr. Snap?

SPIF. Yes, I used to be a waiter near the Law Courts.

LORD W. He writes me that he can arrest my son.

SPIF. Quite right. He took the law into his own hands with his feet.

LORD W. My son told you that?

SPIF. Yes, at his first breakfast, yesterday.

LORD W. First breakfast?

SPIF. Yes, he had two yesterday, one after the other.

LORD W. He is indeed changing. (*double knock*) That is Mr. Snap!

SPIF. Sounds more like the Lord Mayor. (*goes R. to glass*)

LADY W. His coming here just as we are expecting Colonel Racket about the marriage settlement is very awkward.

LORD W. Devilish inconvenient.

*Enter JAMES R. C.*

JAMES. Miss Evangeline Van Bock. (*JAMES hands papers to LORD WALLERTON up R.*)

*Enter EVANGELINE. Exit JAMES.*

LADY W. (*greets her down L. C.*) Oh, it's you, Eva dear?

LORD W. And the documents have just arrived also. (*shows them to EVA*)

EVA. (*excitedly*) Yes—I know—from Lloyd and Swain.

LADY W. What is the matter, Eva?

EVA. I came first—before the Colonel—that I might see you alone, and tell you.

LORD W. That sounds like my dismissal before I have

had time to greet you ; (*shakes hands*) however I must look these over if you'll excuse me ?

LADY W. Yes, dear, (*to LORD WALLERTON*) and perhaps Mr. Spiffins would like some refreshment ?

LORD W. Come to my study, will you ? I have some excellent whisky which I think you will like. (*takes him off L. U. E.*)

LADY W. You appear distressed and agitated, child.

EVA. This marriage, Lady Wallerton, this marriage !  
(*C.*)

LADY W. (*sits R.*) That surely does not distress you ?

EVA. Yes, it does.

LADY W. Eva !

EVA. (*pacing room*) I know you all intend it for my welfare—that I may retain my fortune in accordance with my father's will, but if Arthur shows this absolute indifference to me I feel that it would be far better for me to break off this engagement rather than ratify it, as you all propose that we shall do to-day. (*stands L. C.*)

LADY W. But, Eva ! Arthur adores you.

EVA. You say so, Lady Wallerton.

LADY W. Have I not reason for saying so ?

EVA. I don't know.

LADY W. Why wasn't his first inquiry when we saw him at Shrove about you ?

EVA. I don't know. I wasn't there.

LADY W. Wasn't his whole conversation as we cycled home of nothing but his darling Evangeline ?

EVA. I shouldn't think so.

LADY W. Evangeline, you don't know him.

EVA. He gives me no opportunity. Where is he now ?

LADY W. Doing his hair—I mean shaving.

EVA. He should be here to meet me. You give me the engagement ring, all your friends are talking about us, and he is silent. (*goes up*)

LADY W. Dumb from rapture, darling.

EVA. Rapture wouldn't deprive him of speech for two months. (*comes down C.*)

LADY W. I'll admit that his enthusiasm for sport has kept him away, but the readiness with which he abandoned his favorite pastime to attend the formalities of your marriage shows the sincerity of his attachment.

EVA. Lady Wallerton, may I see him alone ?

LADY W. Yes—if you desire it. (*rises*)

EVA. I do, and if I find he loves this girl at Shrove—  
(*crosses to R. C.*)

LADY W. (*C. hastily*) These rumours, darling, which I regret to see have reached you, are without foundation.  
(*knock*)

EVA. Oh, dear, the Colonel already ! (*excitedly*)

LADY W. I think not.

EVA. Yes, it is.

LADY W. No, calm yourself. It's most likely a gentleman we are expecting from the lawyers.

EVA. I must see Arthur before I sign anything. (*goes to her*)

LADY W. (*taking her hands*) Yes, darling, I have already promised you that. (*leading her out, L. U. E.*) Come and take off your cloak and let us have a long chat all about Arthur. (*exeunt L. U. E.*)

*Enter JAMES R. U. E. SNAP, dressed up a bit, follows.*

JAMES. What name am I to give his Lordship ?

SNAP. (*snapping fingers*) Snap. Here's my card (*gives envelope*) No, it ain't got no stamp on it 'cause I want you to deliver it personally yourself.

JAMES. Oh, indeed. (*exit L. U. E.*)

SNAP. This all looks good enough for three hundred and costs (*tries chairs, etc.*) No fuss, no unpleasantness, no nothink, says my Boss, if prospects of pay be reasonable ; but if he does a bunk pounce on 'im like an 'awk—them's the Guvnor's words—like an 'awk. (*gets out photo*) Two bob for that at Claude Loraine Smith's—you beauty—you've led me a nice dance, saying your father was in Bengal, but I've got you this time. (*down R.*)

*Enter LORD WALLERTON L. U. E. closes door.*

SNAP. (*aside*) The dossy gent I saw at the Red Lion yesterday.

LORD W. (*coming down L.*) I understand, sir, that you wish to see me in reference to my son ?

SNAP. Yes, sir.

LORD W. Won't you remove your hat ? (*LORD WALLERTON indicates hat with hand, etc.*)

SNAP. I didn't see no place to 'ang it. (*takes it off, places it on sofa*)

LORD W. Now, sir. (*L.*)

SNAP. Well, sir? (*grinning*) Boys will be boys. (R. C.)

LORD W. (*sharply*) What's your business?

SNAP. (*as sharply producing writ with a flourish*) This 'ere writ.

LORD W. (*indignant, and sceptical but declining to look at writ*). Writ? Rubbish. Against my son? Preposterous! What's the amount? Ridiculous!

SNAP. No, it ain't. It's £300 and £3:3:0 costs; total £303:3:0.

LORD W. Is that all? (*sits L. takes up paper, reads*)

SNAP. Yes, that's all. You're quite surprised we takes the trouble to collect it, ain't you? (*reads endorsement*) Bill drawn by John Clethedge on Swineheart, Downey, and Abrahams and backed by a A. Partridge.

LORD W. (*puts down paper*) Then this fellow Clethedge, drew the bill, had the money, bolts, and leaves my boy to meet his liabilities? (*rings*)

SNAP. That's it, my lord, a cruel case of mistrusted confidence; (*sits*) but I don't leave this house till the money's paid, or I takes the alternative.

*Enter JAMES R. U. E.*

JAMES. Did you ring, my lord?

LORD W. Yes, request her ladyship to come here. (*takes up a journal, reads. Exit JAMES L. U. E.*)

SNAP. (*after looking over at LORD WALLERTON thinks he should begin a conversation. He can dust boots with his colored handkerchief, etc.*) 'Ad a lot of rain lately?

LORD W. (*grumpily*) Yes. (*reads*)

SNAP. (*echoing him*) Yes. And if yer puts on tarpaulins, hingerrubber gollosers, a Souwester, and carries a rain but not hair-proof umbrella, out comes the blazing sun, and you looks like a harse.

LORD W. I do?

SNAP. Yes. No, the man in the mack.

LORD W. Ah! (*reads*)

SNAP. If people gets wet feet it affects their throat—goes from one extremity to another—yet if you wet your head it don't give you chilblains. (*crossing to him*) How do you account for that?

LORD W. There's no need for us to converse. (*rises, crosses to sofa R., sits*)

SNAP. You needn't if you don't want to, I'll do the

talking. You see I belong to a debating society (*sitting on sofa beside him*)

*Enter* LADY WALLERTON L. U. E.

LORD W. (*rising*) Thank goodness !

LADY W. Do you want to see me, dear ? (L.)

LORD W. Yes, I believe I have discovered the reason of Arthur's prolonged absence from town. (*crosses to C.*)

LADY W. Yes, Reginald ?

LORD W. (*introducing*) Mr.— (*snaps fingers*)

SNAP. (*snaps fingers*) Snap, quite right. (LADY WALLERTON L., LORD WALLERTON C., SNAP R.)

LORD W. Arthur's good nature appears to have involved him in some money difficulties, and, instead of coming home and confiding his troubles to us, he has hoped to escape the service of a writ by remaining at Shrove. This seems to me to account for his whole conduct.

LADY W. Your son involved in money difficulties ? The man must be mistaken.

SNAP. I thought you might say that, so I've brought a photo of the gent what owes the money. Partridges is plentiful, but the photo fixes him. (*thrusts photo across* LORD WALLERTON *to* LADY WALLERTON. LORD WALLERTON *takes it from him rebukingly and hands it deferentially to* LADY WALLERTON)

LADY W. It is Arthur. (*hands it to* LORD WALLERTON) I was with him when he had it taken.

LORD W. There's no doubt about it— (SNAP  *rubs hands*) about the likeness—and (*pompously*) if he admit the debt I'll pay it. (SNAP *turns away* R.)

LADY W. (*aside to him as she goes up* L.) How can you, Reginald ?

SNAP. (*turning*) Now ?

LORD W. (C. *consults watch*) There's the difficulty.

SNAP. (*sits* R.) Ah !

LORD W. (*going to him and affecting a confidential style*) You see Mr.—(*snaps finger trying to remember*)

SNAP. Quite right, (*snaps fingers*) Snap.

LORD W. The banks are closed, and (*going nearer to him*) I am forced to tell you in confidence that my son is about to affiancé himself to an heiress. The lady, in fact, is here now, her guardian may arrive at any

moment. Your appearance and the introduction of this matter may mar the fulfilment of our hopes.

SNAP. (*grins incredulously*) That story won't wash, Guv'nor.

LORD W. Sir! (*LADY WALLERTON interested comes down a little*)

SNAP. Why he's going to marry the Landlord's daughter at Shrove to-morrow.

LORD W. (*severely*) He was, I believe, fond of her, but her father and I have arranged everything satisfactorily.

SNAP. (*rises*) Well, arrange satisfactorily with *me*, and I'll go. (*goes up R. and arranges hair, etc., at glass*)

*Enter JAMES with card on salver R. C. to LORD and LADY WALLERTON down, up of table L.)*

LADY W. (*takes card*) Caroline Hunter (*reads card and projects name*) I can't see that old woman to-day. Not at home, James. (*exit JAMES R. C.*) He must remain here, there's no help for it. (*places card on table L.*)

LORD W. But Arthur will bolt, as he did at Shrove, if he sees him.

LADY W. Not if you tell him we have arranged to settle the matter.

LORD W. But how are we to account for the fellow's presence?

LADY W. Say he is one of Lloyd & Swain's clerks. Get him away, I believe some one is coming. (*goes up and looks off R. C.*)

LORD W. Mr. Snap, I have some excellent whisky in my study where we can arrange this matter—do you follow me?

SNAP. (*wiping mouth*) I do, my Lord.

LORD W. Then will you follow me? (*goes off L. U. E.*)

SNAP. I will, my lord. (*follows him, exits L. U. E.*)

LADY W. Thank goodness (*seeing hat SNAP has left on sofa*) Arthur must not see this, or he will know the man has been here. (*takes up hat daintily, is looking for some place to put it*)

*Enter SNAP L. U. E. looks for hat, sees it in her hand.*

SNAP. Excuse me—my tile. (*takes it, stops at L. U. E.*) Won't you join us?

LADY W. (*horrified*) Sir! (*exit SNAP hurriedly*)  
What an odious person! (*she goes down L.*)

*Enter ALFRED R. C. in a light suit, is smoking.*

ALF. (*removing cigar from mouth and getting it away*) I beg your pardon. Were you referring to me. . . .  
Mother? (*up R.*)

LADY W. That one word atones for everything. You have never called me mother, before. (L. C.)

ALF. I don't remember ever to have done so, now you mention it.

LADY W. (*heartily*) Yet why should you not?

ALF. There's no reason—if *you* don't object.

LADY W. Object, dear. What nonsense!

ALF. It is, isn't it?

LADY W. Yes, for you make me feel that you no longer resent my filling the late Lady Wallerton's place.

ALF. I don't mind you doing that in the least.

LADY W. I thought you did.

ALF. How could you?

LADY W. By your leaving for Shrove directly I married your father, and came to live here, then again, when you returned last night you left me abruptly and went to bed.

ALF. I was wet.

LADY W. I forgot that. (*sits L.*)

ALF. I didn't; I wore the damp clothes.

LADY W. But this morning, dear?

ALF. I was sleepy this morning.

LADY W. Did not the knowledge that an important legal document awaited your attention cause you to shake off all drowsiness?

ALF. (*alarmed*) A legal document?

LADY W. Could you forget it?

ALF. No, Snap won't let me forget it. (*sits on sofa*)

LADY W. Snap?

ALF. Yes. . . . Mother, but you don't know what I'm talking about.

LADY W. Yes, I do. You mean the bill you backed for £300.

ALF. Jerusalem!

LADY W. There is no need to mention that sacred city, dear. It was not that little matter to which I had reference, but the settlement,



ALF. Its the *settlement* that worries me.

LADY W. Don't let it do that. She is good-nature and forgiveness itself.

ALF. She? (*aside*) They've got a she, here too.

LADY W. I would have written Mr. Snap a cheque for the other matter at once had I not overdrawn my banking account to meet some of your father's most pressing liabilities. But set your mind at rest, he has the matter in hand. I could not allude to your father's affairs before, but now I am *like* one of the family.

ALF. (*aside*) So am I. (*he is like ARTHUR he means*)

LADY W. The important legal document to which I alluded is one, the settlement of which deeply concerns you.

ALF. Do you refer to the—er—Clethedge document?

LADY W. No, dear. The document to which I refer concerns one that is dearer to you than Clethedge.

ALF. Clethedge is the *dearest* fellow I ever knew.

LADY W. But he is a man (*with meaning*) the other—remember—concerns a lady.

ALF. A lady?

LADY W. (*playfully*) Yes, Mr. Innocent, and a settlement is only what is due from you to her.

ALF. A lady, and what is due to her from me?

LADY W. Of course, what you owe her—what she has a right to expect from you.

ALF. Oh, I know.

LADY W. Of course you do.

ALF. Ten Flor de Cuba cigars, a breakfast, and a box of Swedish matches.

LADY W. My dear boy, what on earth are you talking about?

ALF. Why, the matter that requires a settlement—what I owe the barmaid at the Red Lion at Shrove.

LADY W. (*rises*) Hush, for heaven's sake! That woman must be wiped out from your memory if you are to remain here.

ALF. She'd have been jolly well washed out if I had remained at Shrove. (*rises*)

LADY W. I have arranged a meeting—you know the kind of meeting I mean?

ALF. I am not quite certain, but I can guess. (*aside*) It's a meeting of the old boy's creditors. (*aloud*) I don't care very much about meetings.

LADY W. You will like this one. (*going to him*)

ALF. Oh, shall I?

LADY W. Yes, for I will see that it is not interrupted.  
My blessing! Success, success! (*exit L. U. E, with a significant nod*)

ALF. Well, I'm damned! I might have expected complications if I took Arthur's place, but that dear old lady is too much for me. How the devil does she know anything about that bill of Clethedge's? Snap hasn't arrested Arthur, or she wouldn't take it so unconcernedly. Rum idea of hers—calling an hotel bill a legal document. Oh, I am not going to worry my head about it. I'm safe from Snap here, and that's all I care about till Thursday. Not a bad weed! I never smoked a weed from the river before. Fancy that barmaid at the "Red Lion" sending on the account for those cigars here, after saying she would wipe it off. Little tow-headed humbug! It's nice to get into dry clothes again, and Arthur's things fit me better than my own. (*feels in trouser pocket*) What's this? (*brings out railway ticket*) Shrove to London. Arthur's been down there before. Two months old! (*transfers it to opposite pocket*) Oh, this "Red Lion" love-making has been going on for some time. He'll get himself into some trouble with that beer girl. These country barmaids know a thing or two. (*whistles, gets to glass*) I rather like Arthur's taste in neckties. (*arranges his at glass, R.*)

*Enter* EVANGELINE, L. U. E. *She has removed hat, or cloak, if evening dress be adopted.*

EVA. There he is. Now, if the speech I have prepared for him doesn't bring him to his senses, I see no advantage in a girl having received a superior education. (*stands near table, L.*)

ALF. (*looking in glass, up R.*) Hullo, a pretty girl! I can see her where she often sees herself. I wonder who she is?

EVA. Hem!

ALF. She's got the influenza.

EVA. (*the following speech is spoken as though learned off*) If you feel that you can never love me, that you cannot consistently with your heart's dictates, be to me what a husband should be, be all in all to me, would it not be better for us to pause now before it is too late,

and mutually resolve to break off this prospective union rather than afterwards lead a life of useless recriminations and regrets? (*pauses, leaning on table out of breath.* ALFRED, *eye-glass in eye, gradually turns to look at her and gradually and slowly comes down R., never taking his eye off her*)

ALF. I beg your pardon; do you mind saying that again?

EVA. You stare at me as though I were an absolute stranger to you.

ALF. 'Twas merely a look of admiration, I assure you. (R.)

EVA. Do you really wish me to repeat what I said?

ALF. You might give me a condensed version of it. I am always ready to oblige a lady, and, if there's any little thing I can do for you—

EVA. (L. C.) Little thing you can do for me? The matter we have to settle now is a serious one.

ALF. (R. C.) A serious one?

EVA. (*impatiently*) Are you not here?

ALF. (*after a pause*) Yes.

EVA. Very well, then, I am here also.

ALF. (C.) Yes, we're both here; there's no doubt about that.

EVA. (L. C.) Well, then, what does our both being here signify? Has not this meeting any meaning to you?

ALF. Oh, *this* is the meeting Lady Wallerton arranged?

EVA. Why, certainly, and do you think you greet me as you should do under the circumstances?

ALF. Well, not having seen you before—

EVA. (*sharply*) What?

ALF. Not having seen you before to-day, I think we should shake hands. (*they hold hands and move them backwards and forwards*)

EVA. Shake hands? Is that all? Why are you so cold?

ALF. You see, I fell in the river yesterday—

EVA. (*throws away his hand; goes L.*) This is no time for jesting. Have you no sympathy for me in the delicate position in which I am placed—in which your conduct places me?

ALF. My conduct? What have I done?

EVA. Nothing. When you had an opportunity of greeting me, you merely shake. You say nothing (*crosses to R.*) when the occasion should make you eloquent. (*turns*) Even now your face wears an expression of hopeless bewilderment instead of beaming with love and solicitude. (*aside*) I think a few tears now would fix him. (*sits on sofa, R.*) Oh, this is cruel and heartless. (*sobs in extravagant style on sofa*) It is, indeed! Oh, dear.

ALF. (*aside, L.*) Arthur's behavior makes it very embarrassing for me. I wouldn't hurt such a sweet girl's feelings for anything, for I'm half in love with her already. (*going to her*) I say, please don't cry.

EVA. Oh!

ALF. Please.

EVA. (*louder*) Oh!

ALF. (*louder*) Please.

EVA. (*sobbing violently*) Oh!

ALF. (*louder*) Please. (*he leaves her*)

EVA. (*aside*) Another sob, and the fortune's mine. Oh!

ALF. This is awful!

EVA. Boo—oo!

ALF. (*L.*) There's a picture of unrequited love. (*EVA laughs aside when she can*) Fancy a fellow deserting a charming ladylike girl like that for a perky, forward barmaid at a country Inn. (*to himself loudly*) Arthur Partridge your conduct is scandalous!

EVA. (*rises, goes to him, touches him on shoulder*) Say no more.

ALF. (*turns*) Eh? Did you hear what I did say?

EVA. Yes, enough *self-condemnation* to convince me that your repentance is sincere.

ALF. (*puzzled*) *Self-condemnation?* (*aside*) Of course, what I said about *Arthur*.

EVA. (*coquetishly*) Shall I tell you a secret?

ALF. (*aside*) This *she* has got a secret, too.

EVA. The marriage settlement has arrived from Lloyd & Swain.

ALF. Oh, has it?

EVA. Before dinner it will be presented to us for signature.

ALF. To *us*?

EVA. Of course, *us*. Who else but *us*?

ALF. Oh, nobody else.

EVA. Now, tell me, can you with a clear conscience affix your name to that document?

ALF. Do you mean me?

EVA. Who else? We are alone. Well, what do you say? (C. *sharply*)

ALF. I didn't say anything. (*backing round table*)

EVA. (*following him round*) But you must say something. You're "not dumb from rapture" now, are you?

ALF. (R.) There are other things than rapture that keep me quiet.

EVA. (L.) Why have you returned so suddenly from Shrove?

ALF. We needn't go into that, need we?

EVA. Why not? My question is a natural one under the circumstances.

ALF. So is my reply.

EVA. (L.) Very well, but I must say that after your kind inquiries about me after talking about your darling the whole way home—

ALF. (R. C.) I did?

EVA. Your stepmother said so, and now when I put aside all maidenly dignity, do all a girl can be expected to do to make your duty easy you treat me with such coolness, that my position becomes humiliating (*crosses and sobs on sofa R.*)

ALF. Here's a devil of a mess. (C.)

EVA. (*sobs ; laughs aside*) I guess he'll come round directly. Oh, dear!

ALF. (L. C.) If I'm to act as Arthur would, I must make love to her, or, shall I tell her who I am and get kicked out into the arms of Snap? No, the love-making's more in my line, so here goes. But I don't know her name (*takes up card*) Her card, sent up when she came.

EVA. (*sobs*)

ALF. (*reads*) Miss Caroline Hunter. Was there ever such luck (*crosses to sofa*) Miss Hunter. (*after a glance at card*)

EVA. (*looking up annoyed*) Don't call me Miss Hunter. (*rises*)

ALF. I won't. (*with great tenderness*) Caroline. (*raising his arms sinks on sofa*)

EVA. That utterance has betrayed you, my worst fears are realized. You love the barmaid.

ALF. I do—nonsense.

EVA. You don't love her?

ALF. No; believe me, Caroline.

EVA. (*reprovingly*) My name is Evangeline.

ALF. Eh? Of course it is (*rises, goes C. tearing up card annoyed*) How could I forget a name never absent from my thoughts?

EVA. I can't guess; your behavior is really so very extraordinary. (*sits on sofa*)

ALF. (*aside*) She's a charming girl, and I wish I were in Arthur's shoes. But I am, and by Jove I will (*goes to her*) Caro—I mean Evangeline.

EVA. Well?

ALF. Would it make you happier if I said I would marry you?

EVA. It would make my future more assured.

ALF. (*aside*) Would it?

EVA. And I think it would make me happier, for, strange as you are at times, there is something about you that is different——

ALF. Oh!

EVA. I can't tell what it is——

ALF. (*aside*) That's a comfort!

EVA. —but I know that it has made me like you better than I ever thought I could—you don't mind my saying so, do you?

ALF. Oh, no. I take it as a great compliment.

EVA. Somehow, you seemed changed.

ALF. I am! *I'm a different man.*

EVA. I should like to feel assured, that, in saying what you have, you are actuated by feelings of affection.

ALF. Do not doubt that Caro—Evangeline—all my past conduct—all my frivolity of demeanor was but to try your love.

EVA. (*aside*) It's more likely to try my temper. (*rises, stands by his side*) You did propose to me, I think?

ALF. Yes, I believe so.

EVA. (*laying head on his shoulder*) Then I am yours.

ALF. Oh, thanks.

EVA. I am happy now.

ALF. I'm glad of that. (*aside*) I wish I were.

EVA. (*releasing herself*) And now to business. (*crossing briskly to L.*)

ALF. (*astonished*) Business?

EVA. (*changing her manner to that of a bright business woman sits R. of table L.*) You are doubtless surprised that a young lady who has offers of marriage by every post, and occasional proposals by wire, should have been so eager to marry you.

ALF. (*snubbed*) No, I can't say that.

EVA. (*sitting R. of table L.*) You see, by my father's will, made in the fulness of his gratitude to Lord Wallerton, for all he did for him in the past, I only inherit his fortune provided I marry a Partridge.

ALF. (*interested*) Eh? (C.)

EVA. *A Wallerton Partridge.*

ALF. (*turning R.*) What's she saying? "A fortune if she marries a Partridge?" Arthur neglects her! I can supply the conditions of this will. (*takes stage excitedly*)

EVA. Hadn't you better sit down?

ALF. Yes, I think I had. (*takes the small chair or hassock up of sofa, and places it R. of EVA. From this moment he has made up his mind to win her and becomes her real lover, instead of merely pretending in order to remain in the house. In sitting he is much lower than she*) Evangeline, I am a Partridge.

EVA. Not a black leg?

ALF. No. (*showing red sock*) A red leg and a Wallerton.

EVA. (*nods acquiescence*) Your stepmother was aware of the conditions of the will, but I insisted upon you being kept in ignorance of them.

ALF. It allowed me to show the disinterested nature of my proposal.

EVA. Yes, darling, I can see that, and I am glad the engagement is ratified.

ALF. It is a matter of mutual delight, dearest.

EVA. —because Lady Wallerton, with an indiscretion, of which I disapprove, has informed so many people of it, that, had it not been fulfilled, Society would have laughed at us, and I should have been left entirely without means, and that is not pleasant.

ALF. No, deuced awkward.

EVA. The numerous presents we have received would have had to have been returned——

ALF. (*quickly*) You haven't sent any back, I hope?

EVA. (*with a satisfied shake of her head*) Oh no, dear.

ALF. That's right.

EVA. My trousseau would have been wasted—and yours also?

ALF. (*looking down admiringly at ARTHUR'S clothes*) Oh, there's no difficulty in getting clothes in this place—so don't worry about that, darling.

EVA. My guardian will be here directly.

ALF. (*suddenly becoming uneasy*) Will he?

EVA. (*joyously*) When he comes we sign the settlement.

ALF. Oh, do we? We're not losing time, my pet.

EVA. (*meaningly*) We have lost so much, dearest. You see the Colonel——

ALF. Who?

EVA. Colonel Rackett. My guardian; he's in pork.

ALF. Is he?

EVA. Yes. He names the day.

ALF. Oh, does he? I'm sure that's very kind of him.

EVA. (*gushingly*) Lady Wallerton furnishes our town house, arranges where we are to be married, who are to be the bridesmaids, where we are to spend our Honeymoon. The Colonel gives us an American yacht—it's not a very large one——

ALF. I don't care about them too large, they get in the way (*aside, delighted*) I've dropped into a good thing! (*aloud*) Anybody else give us anything?

EVA. Of course, I've only just begun to tell you about them. Earl Bowden gives us a brougham, and Lady Milliken gives me a victoria. Sir Roger gives us a grand piano, Prince Tricksikoff gives us four Russian horses, Mrs. Flick a tandem bicycle, and a set of golf clubs, and we ought to be the happiest couple in the world.

ALF. Fortune is kinder to me than I deserve, but my greatest fortune is in having met a girl like you. (*about to kiss*)

*Enter* JAMES R. C.

JAMES. Colonel Aristovistus Rackett.



EVA. (*rising*) My guardian. (*crosses ALFRED and up R.*)

ALF. (*rising*) Oh, damn the guardian. (*replaces small chair, or hassock, and goes L.*)

*Enter COLONEL ; exit JAMES. Sees EVA, who indicates ALFRED, who is down L. COLONEL rushes to him, seizes his hand, shakes it, speaks hurriedly and with great heartiness.*

COL. My dear Partridge, let me grasp you by the hand. (*does so*) Your presence here delights me. (*shake*) It has, so to speak, dispelled the gloom that was slowly but surely setting upon our hopes. (*shake, etc.*) But now that has passed, and your lives henceforth will be as smooth as a placid lake upon which the sun is everlastingly pouring down its rays.

ALF. I beg your pardon, but do you mind saying that again? (*leaves him and goes up back of him, R., to EVA*)

COL. (*assuming an oratorical attitude*) I say, sir, that the sunshine of your lives is assured, for your presence here has evaporated the mists which clouded the fair horizon of your existence, and I fancy—(*looks round to his left*)—I fancy the fellow's gone.

ALF. (*up R. C. with EVA*) I beg your pardon.

COL. (*L.*) Granted ; but you have nipped in the bud a speech that would have delighted our state senate. A word with you on business.

ALF. (*coming down cautiously*) On business ?

COL. Yes, sir ; I am a man of business. Now, in my ward you have a lady of unsurpassing loveliness. Her fortune will be enormous. Now, what about your prospects ?

ALF. Oh, my prospects ! (*aside*) This is getting awkward.

COL. Your father said you had an estate at some wood.

ALF. Firewood ?

COL. No, Fairwood.

ALF. Fairwood ? It's ten miles from Shrove.

COL. And your private income ?

ALF. Oh, that's further off. (*goes to EVA*)

COL. Ah, I see ; you're full of love for that beautiful

girl, and are burning to put the name of Arthur Partridge to that legal document?

ALF. (*nervously*) There's no hurry to sign anything, is there?

COL. Why, of course. I must get back to New York by the next steamer. Eva! (*she comes down to him*) That young man seems very strange.

EVA. Not to me, Guardy. I understand him now. (*returns to ALFRED; they get up stage, R.*)

COL. I'm hamed if I do. (*crosses to R., down stage*)

*Enter LADY WALLERTON, L. U. E.*

LADY W. (*coming down to him, R.*) Ah, my dear Colonel! (*shakes hands*) My husband is here. (*turns up and talks to EVA and ALFRED*)

*Enter LORD WALLERTON, followed by SPIFFINS and SNAP, affected by the whisky, and very beaming. SPIFFINS carries settlement.*

COL. Ah, Lord Wallerton!

LORD W. These, my dear Colonel, are Messrs. Lloyd & Swain's representatives. This is Mr.— (*ALFRED is standing nearest to LORD WALLERTON, and as SNAP comes forward to bow to COLONEL, who is down R. C., ALFRED turns and sees him*)

ALF. (*terrified*) Snap! (*bolts off, R. C.* LORD WALLERTON *grabs him, pulls him back, flinging up his coat-tails, lets him go. ALFRED runs off. LORD WALLERTON after SNAP, steadying himself, exits after them*)

COL. (*to SPIFFINS, who stands with settlement, L. C.*) My dear sir, let me grasp you by the hand, and allow me to say that I consider it a privilege to meet so worthy a representative of the law.

SPIF. Lor'! (*grins*) Won't you sit down? COLONEL *takes settlement; sits top of table, L.* SPIFFINS *sits L.* EVA and LADY WALLERTON *cross to COLONEL. LADY WALLERTON draws EVA'S attention to document to prevent her noticing SNAP and ALFRED*)

*Enter LORD WALLERTON, bringing in ALFRED and SNAP with him.*

LORD W. (*as he enters*) I have arranged to settle that little matter.

ALF. (*looks at SNAP, SNAP nods, to LORD WALLERTON*) You're a brick.

COL. (*at settlement*) I presume that this document is drawn up in strict conformity with the late Judge Van Bock's testament?

SPIF. Eh? (*SNAP sits beside SPIFFINS*)

COL. (*to SNAP*) I presume that this document is drawn up in strict conformity with the wishes expressed in the late Judge Van Bock's testament?

SNAP. Oh, ask me another; I don't know nothing about testiments.

LORD W. Yes, Colonel, the hindrance to marriage laws do not affect us, as the property is left in charge to you. (*SNAP and SPIFFINS acquiesce. EVA goes R. to ALFRED*)

EVA. (*goes to ALFRED, R.*) Why so serious?

ALF. I feel matters are becoming serious. (R.)

EVA. You have only to sign, dear. (R. C.)

ALF. Oh, that little affair you mentioned?

EVA. Yes; have you forgotten?

LORD W. Is everything ready?

SNAP. } Everything is now in order.  
SPIF. }

COL. Will you sign first, Eva?

EVA. (*crossing to table*) Yes, Guardy. (*signs, all looking on. She then offers pen to ALFRED*)

ALF. (R., *aside*) I shall be had up for forgery in a minute.

LORD W. Now, my boy, your signature.

ALF. (*to EVA, who smilingly offers pen*) One moment, dear. (*crosses her to table, and leisurely takes up document and stands C.*) What's it all about? (*reads, everybody exhibiting signs of impatience*) I see, dear (*to EVA, R. C.*), this is what you contribute to the household expenses?

EVA. (*indicating with feather end of pen*) Yes, dear; New Jersey railway stock, Michigan lake steamer shares, California mines, one quarter share in Messrs. Rackett & Howard's pork-packing firm, Chicago—

COL. (*proudly*) One of the biggest concerns in Illinois.

ALF. Ah! (*seizing an excuse of delay*) I suppose that story about the pigs walking in at one end of the machine and coming out sausages at the other is not true?

COL. It's an absolute fabrication, sir. (*SPIFFINS and SNAP are delighted with ALFRED'S joke*)

ALF. I thought so. I'll read the Will.

LORD W. Settlement, sir.

ALF. Yes, settlement. (*reads*) The said Evangeline Van Bock hereby firstly grants, conveys, leases, and makes over——

COL. You sign at the bottom.

ALF. (*looking down over the long document*) I haven't got there yet, old chap— (*reads*) together with wall fruits——

LORD W. All fruits, not wall fruits.

ALF. So it is (*reads*) All fruits, usufructs (*to EVA*) I'm glad we've got a few of them (*reads*) together with all singular outhouses, bridges, ways, watercourses, pigeon-houses, hen-runs, pig-styes, stables, trees, turberies, turn-stiles, woods, underwoods, hedges, ditches, fences, rails, and all profits, easements, advantages, rights, members and appurtenances whatsoever. (*to her*) I say we ought to be happy?

EVA. Yes, (*with tender meaning*) but these things are not all.

ALF. No, there's plenty more, (*reads*) also, all the estate, in any wise appertaining, or usually held occupied or——

LORD W. (*impatiently*) Yes, yes, we understand all that.

ALF. Do you? I wish I did. (*reads*) —and it is further— (*everybody has been growing more and more impatient*)

OMNES. Sign it.

ALF. But I ought to read it before I sign it. (*reads*) and it is further conceded, agreed, and decided upon——

OMNES. (*louder*) Sign it.

LORD W. Sign it, and I'll take all the responsibility. (*crosses to R.*)

ALF. Oh, if you'll take all the responsibility, here goes. (*signs at table L.*)

SPIF. (*producing letter*) Found at last. (*crosses to R. gives letter to LORD WALLERTON*)

LORD W. (*surprised*) It's addressed to me—dated to-day. What's this letter about, Arthur?

ALF. I haven't read it. (*finishing signing*)

LORD W. You read it when you wrote it? (*reads it*)  
What's this? (*all near table look at his signature*)

ALF. (*aside, up stage*) The letter from Arthur. I'm off. (*exits unperceived R. C.*)

LORD W. (*reads*) My dear father, I have decided to wed where my affections are fixed (*all listen*) and write to inform you that to-morrow I marry Miss Stubbs.

OMNES. What?

SNAP. (*rising*) 'Ow could he write from Shrove if he was here?

LORD W. (*holding out letter, angry*) I know my son's signature.

COL. (*holding out document*) So do I (*indicating*) and this *is not* his signature.

SNAP. (*comparing signature on his bill with that on settlement*) But I say it are his siggiture, I've got it on this bill. (*going C.*)

LORD W. (*looking at signature on bill for the first time*) That's a forgery.

LADY W. Where is Arthur? (*ladies rush to window*)

LORD W. Surely he hasn't gone? (*goes up*)

SPIF. But he have and your spoofed—clean spoofed. (*bangs SNAP on shoulder, holding him from following*)  
ALFRED. SPIFFINS roaring with laughter)

## CURTAIN.

## ACT III.

SCENE.—*Same as Act I, but decorated with flags, etc. Table to R. C. is set for four. Cheers heard before rising of curtain, a crowd of Yokels, Butcher, Postman, etc., discovered at Bar, SPIFFINS serving free drinks, all hubbub and excitement. Two cyclists leave, laughing and cheering as they go. SPIFFINS and STUBBS wear favors.*

OMNES. (*drinking*) Hurrah for Miss Peggy, and Mr. Partridge, hurrah!

STUBBS. (*with wedding favors*) Thank 'ee, friends. (*handing favors*) Put on wedding favors. No work on farm to-day, no work, I tell thee, lads. See 'em wed, gie

'em a cheer, and then ye'll find a feast in barn as will gie thy teeth summat to do. Go out and see it—t'will gie th' an appetite, I warrant (*exeunt Yokels, C.*) (*to Butcher and Postman.*) Thou'lt carve for 'em, Mr. Blet, and after we'll have a quiet bit by ourselves here. See as all is right in barn, now? (*exit Butcher and Postman, smiling, etc.*)

*Enter CRAG carrying flowers. CRAG is the oldest inhabitant, a yokel in smock bent double with age.*

CRAG. Here be posies, Maister Stubbs.

STUB. That's right. (*taking them*) Peggy's wonderful fond of flowers on tables. (*bunches flowers on table R. C.*) Gie me a mug, Spiffins?

SPIF. (*pours some water in a mug and hands it*) Yes, sir.

STUB. That's right, put in a drain of water. (*takes flowers, puts them in mug*)

CRAG. Looks like a fate (*fight*) outside.

STUB. Aye, and like a Fête inside, wie banners, and decorations. (*giving favor*) Pin one of these on thy smock, and look happy.

CRAG. Thank 'ee. (*goes up R. to Bar to SPIFFINS, who pins on favor, while CRAG in pantomime tells him about fight outside. SPIFFINS goes off with CRAG*)

STUB. (*arranging flowers*) Shrove don't see a wedding like this every day.

(*Enter PEGGY L. U. E.*)

PEG. How gay we look, Dad! (*looking up at flags, etc.*)

STUB. Aye, (*at flowers*) but flowers don't seem to settle so pretty under my clumsy fingers as they do under thine, lass.

PEG. (*taking his arm*) Dad.

STUB. Yes, lass?

PEG. (*leading him C. with mock seriousness*) Decorating lodgers' tables was more than my mother did for them when she was alive.

STUB. Flowers ain't for lodgers, they be for my wedding guests.

PEG. But plucking them will destroy them.

STUB. Well, if it do, what matter a few flowers when they're for a wedding?

PEG. Or for a husband? (*smiling*)

STUB. Eh? Thou'rt poking fun at me, 'cause I lectured thee when I had doubts o' thy lad's intentions.

PEG. But you trust Arthur now, Dad?

STUB. Yes, I trust the lad, trust him with thee—wie all that makes the sunshine of my life. (*kisses her forehead, R. C.*)

*Enter CRAG L. C.*

CRAG. Fate be almost over.

STUB. Fête over? It hasn't begun.

CRAG. Fate down lane, I means, wie Master Partridge and young Rushton. (*exit excitedly.*)

PEG. (*down R.*) A fight, Dad—Arthur will be killed!

STUB. Don't worry about thy lad, Peggy. He can take care of himself. (*C.*)

PEG. (*trying to pass him*) I must go to him.

STUB. (*detaining her*) Stay where thou art, lass—(*jeers and laughter heard off*) they be coming here.

*Enter RUSHTON supported by SPIFFINS on one side who carries his coat, and CRAG on the other side who carries his collar, tie, etc. His face is battered about. They bring him down and seat him L. Yokels laugh jeeringly at him and hurry off to ARTHUR.*

PEG. Tell me quickly, Spiffins, is Arthur injured?

SPIF. (*fanning RUSHTON in professional style*) Not a scratch on him, Miss.

RUSH. (*putting on collar, etc.*) It's *me* that you've got to be anxious about.

PEG. R. *You!* (*contemptuously*)

RUSH. Yes, *me*. I've been better threshed than my last year's wheat was.

STUB. (*laughing*) Threshed, Rushton? You look as though you'd been through a chaff cutter. (*goes to table, puts salt down L. C. on table*)

RUSH. You don't catch me hitting a man what's littler than myself again in a hurry.

PEG. You were a coward to do so. (*exits L. C.*)

RUSH. I was worse than a coward, I was a darned fool. (*takes his coat from SPIFFINS*)

STUB. I thought thee'd catch it. (*business at table*)

RUSH. Aye. (*putting on coat*) If there be a sale of damaged goods anywhere about they'd better put me in the shop window as a sample—I bain't fit for much else. (*hurrahing and shouting heard off*)

*Enter ARTHUR and PEGGY. STUBBS pats him on back and exits C. They come down R. ARTHUR wears blue serge coat and vest and pants ALFRED wore in Act I. ARTHUR wears hat during this scene.*

ART. Now, Rushton, you promised to apologize.

RUSH. I be come to do it, but you've hanged my chaps about so much that they don't work easy enough for fine speeches: but I apologize to you, Peggy.

ART. That's right. Have a glass of beer?

RUSH. No, thank 'ee. I've drank so much lately for the good of the house, that I'd rather leave it alone a bit for the benefit of my health.

ART. Have anything else?

RUSH. (*hand to eye*) No, thank 'ee, I've *had quite enough*.

ART. Spiffins, take Mr. Rushton down to Elizabeth, and let her attend to him.

SPIF. Yes, sir. (*leading RUSHTON off L.*) This way Professor. (*exeunt L.*)

PEG. I'm glad you are not hurt, Arthur.

ART. So am I. A black eye doesn't look well on a bridegroom. (*wonderingly*) He says he threw me in the river. Why, I haven't been there since I caught those perch. (*they walk together*)

PEG. I thought I saw you crossing the meadow this morning.

ART. Saw me—going fishing on my wedding day—could you believe that?

PEG. Yes, when I found your rod gone. (*pointing to stand*)

ART. Rod gone? (*looks*) So it is. That's the third thing I've lost this morning. There's the rod gone—somebody's taken my bike and—

PEG. What's the third article?

ART. Well—I've lost my trousers.

PEG. (*covers her face with her hands, then looks at his legs and laughs*) Were you bathing?

ART. No, dear, sleeping.



PEG. (*puzzled*) Sleeping?

ART. Somebody made a bed of the sofa in my dressing room last night, and this morning left these (*indicating pants*) instead of my blue ones, and, as our trunks all went to Fairwood yesterday, I had to wear them or nothing.

PEG. They seem to fit you.

ART. Of course they do, they're mine.

PEG. Yours, Arthur? You must be mistaken.

ART. No, I'm not, dear. I wore these the day I first came down here, and didn't go back for a week. (*producing half ticket*) Here's the unused half of my return ticket. How a pair of trousers I left at Eaton square could have travelled down here is a mystery!

PEG. That reminds me. Did you write to Eaton Square as you promised me?

ART. Yes, *but I think it was a mistake.* (*they get R. C.*)

*Enter STUBBS L. C. with telegram.*

STUB. (*excitedly*) Here's a telegram from thy father!

ART. (*quickly*) Surely not?

STUB. (*hands it*) Read it.

ART. (*reads*) Landlord, Red Lion, Shrove: Will arrive about noon, prepare lunch for five. Wallerton. (*aside*) The devil!

STUB. They be coming to see thee wed. Eh, lad, but that's nice and friendly of 'em.

ART. (*dubiously*) Yes. (*hands wire to PEGGY*)

STUB. I'll enjoy having a pipe, and a glass of grog wie the old gentleman.

ART. (*aside*) Will you?

STUB. I hope they get down in time for the wedding.

ART. I hope they don't, I must go and hurry things up a bit. (*exit R*)

STUB. (*to PEGGY who is following ARTHUR*) Lunch for five, was it?

PEG. (*returns to him*) Yes, Dad. (*gives wire, runs off R.*)

STUB. (*calls*) Spiffins! (*moves excitedly*) Spiffins! *enter SPIFFINS leisurely L.*) tell Elizabeth to get lunch for five, soup—couple of spring chickens—shoulder of lamb, (*goes R. calls*) bring a sprig of mint wie thee, Peggy. (*back to SPIFFINS*) We ought to have some fish.

SPIF. A few aromas would come in handy now.

STUB. Aromas? What art talking about? They must taste one of Betsey's rhubarb pies, (*goes R. calls*) and Peggy, bring in a few sticks of rhubarb—get that under basket, it be sweeter. (*returns*) Now, Spiffins, what the devil are you doing there doing nothing? Bustle, lad. I'll see to wine. Bustle, bustle. (*exit L. U. E.*)

SPIF. (*looks off L. C.*) Hullo! There's the Professor with his head bound up. Whoop, he's fallen into the ditch. Now they're helping him out. Well, I've seen a bit of sparring in my time, but I never did see a chap get such a knock out. (*sparring business*) Why the little fellow danced around you like a fire-cracker. Quiet of the country! Lor, Fleet Street ain't in it for excitement! (*exit L.*)

*Enter ALFRED with rod, basket in one hand and a duck in the other. He wears the coat and vest he wore in Act II., and dark serge pants like coat ARTHUR wears.)*

ALF. I have had some sport. Caught twelve—eleven fish and a duck. (*puts away rod, etc.*) Caught the fish in the river, the duck in the field. It swallowed the worm while I lay down the rod to put away the fish. I'll have the fish for lunch, and the duck for dinner. Lunch! (*seeing table*) why, it's already laid for me. (*sits*) They've cut enough for a school treat, but I'll do my best. (*helps himself*) What I like about this place is that they always have meals knocking about (*eating*) and never charge for anything. Over-slept myself this morning, and Arthur nearly caught me—that's cycling. Slipped on his trousers by mistake—that's hurrying. Found knife in one pocket, and pocket-book in the other, four blades in knife, four fivers in pocket-book, all of which I have kept—that's borrowing. (*helping himself*) Old Cleth-edge is going to pay this afternoon, and I'm glad, for I wouldn't be disgraced in Caroline's—I mean Evangeline's eyes for the world. (*eats*)

*Enter STUBBS with wine, L.*

STUB. That's right, lad, enjoy thy last hour of freedom.

ALF. (*alarmed*) Freedom? (*aside*) Is Snap about, I wonder?

STUB. (*going up to bar and putting wine on counter*) It's a fine day for a marriage. (*opens bottle*)

ALF. (*aside*) The marriage craze has got down here now—it's like an epidemic.

STUB. (*drawing cork*) I have just had a peep at her. (*coming down C.*)

ALF. Who have you had a peep at?

STUB. Who? Why the girl you hope to marry. (*sits L. of table*)

ALF. (*surprised*) Is she down here?

STUB. Of course she is.

ALF. (*rising*) I must speak to her.

STUB. Th'canna, lad—she be putting on her wedding gown. (*hand on his shoulder, forces him gently into his seat*)

ALF. She loses no time. I only proposed to her yesterday.

STUB. The day afore, lad. (*places glasses*) Let's drink her health? (*pours out wine. ALFRED sits top of table*)

ALF. With pleasure.

STUB. (*holding out glass of wine in left hand and eyeing it*) You don't get a glass of port like this every day?

ALF. I haven't got that yet. (*STUB hands it him with a laugh*) Thanks. (*takes it*) Well, here's to Caroline. (*drinks his off*)

STUB. (*putting his down from his lips*) Her name isn't Caroline.

ALF. Of course not; that's only the name I gave her yesterday. I may give her another name to-day.

STUB. If you *don't*, I shall be much mistaken in you. Come? drink to the bride.

ALF. I can't, Caroline's had it. (*holds up empty glass*)

STUB. Ah! (*fills it*)

BOTH. To the bride. (*they drink*)

STUB. Another?

ALF. No more. (*STUB urges him*) Well, she deserves it (*aside*) if I don't.

STUB. She do. (*fills glasses*)

ALF. By the way, have you been told about the presents?

STUB. Presents, lad, be you and her to get presents?

ALF. Rather, I heard of 'em up at Eaton Square, yesterday.

STUB. You never said you went there, but I might have guessed by what happened this morning. (*sips wine*)

ALF. (*aside*) What's the old idiot talking about?

STUB. Well, tell us about presents.

ALF. (*eating*) To begin with, I understand that Colonel Rocket will buy us a house in Park Lane.

STUB. But I thought you were going to live at your shooting box at Fairwood?

ALF. That *is* where we live, but we *reside* in Park Lane.

STUB. Oh, I see.

ALF. Lady Wallerton furnishes our town house.

STUB. I had an idea she were against the match.

ALF. Quite the reverse. She's in raptures over it. May I trouble you for the salt? (STUBBS *hands it*) Admiral Spoof gives us a grand piano, and a book of easy duets for little fingers.

STUB. (*enthusiastically*) Have another glass of port?

ALF. No.

STUB. Yes. (*business*)

ALF. Well, only to the brim. (*lets him fill glass*) Stop.

STUB. Any more presents?

ALF. (*sipping wine and getting reckless*) Oh, dear, yes, Sir Roger de Coverley—

STUB. I've heard of he.

ALF. Of course you have (*sings*) Rum-ti-tum-ti-tid-del-dee. (STUBBS *joins him singing*)

Well, *he* gives us a four-in-hand. Earl what's-his-name gives us a yacht. Lady Milkcan gives us a victoria, and Prince Tickemoff, the Russian ambassador, gives us the horses. (*pats STUBBS on the back*)

STUB. (*rises overcome*) This wonderful news takes my breath away. (*goes to C. as if to take the air*)

ALF. It did mine, when I heard it!

STUB. (*looking out to R.*) Here's another friend wie a present. (*goes down to ALFRED*)

*Enter RUSHTON L. C. carrying a cradle, wears cap. White bandage still on, but raised over one eye.*

ALF. Friend! (*rises in alarm*) Why, that's the brute who pushed me in the river yesterday.

RUSH. (*up stage*) You told me I was a liar for saying so half an hour ago.

ALF. I? (*down R.*)

RUSH. (L. C.) Yes, black eye, but there I respects you

for it, for that black eye has made me see straight, and as I've lost the girl you be going to marry——

ALF. (*laughing*) You've lost the girl I'm going to marry? I like that. (*STUBBS and ALFRED laugh at him*)

RUSH. Of course you do; but I don't. However, I says, let bygones be bygones, and so I asks you to accept this humble present, and a few little articles mother made when she thought her and me would have got wed, but she's yours now and so's the cradle, and ceteras, and I 'opes you'll find 'em useful?

ALF. (*as RUSHTON puts cradle with wool boots, et cetera, into his arms*) I say—but——

RUSH. No, thanks, you've won 'em, and her fair, and I wish you all happiness. (*STUBBS pats RUSHTON on back as he turns up to leave and leads him up and off* L. C. *RUSHTON talking and pointing over his shoulder with his right thumb*)

ALF. (*C. stands with cradle in his arms, looking at it through eye-glass*) I see the whole thing, Arthur's going to marry the Barmaid on the sly, and Evangeline is free. But why should he give me this damned thing because another fellow gives him a black eye? It's economical to have a double, but it's a bit confusing. (*puts cradle down near counter on stool and examines wool boots*) People would never have corns if they always wore things like these.

*Enter STUBBS excitedly C.)*

STUB. Here be your noble father and mother actually walking on foot from the station! (*looks out C.*)

ALF. Does he imagine the nobility usually walk on their hands?

STUB. Come along, lad, and gie thy father a welcome?

ALF. You're making a mistake—it's not my father.

STUB. It must be, lad, there's no other train they could catch. (*calls*) Spiffins!

SPIF. (*from parlor*) Yes, sir.

STUB. Come tend bar, th' must take Miss Peggy's placé, now (*to ALFRED*) Come, lad, and meet thy father.

ALF. After you, Mr. Stubbs. (*satisfied, STUBBS exits C.*) a long way after you. (*exits R.*)

*Enter SPIFFINS, goes to table.*

SPIF. Who's been a 'elping theirselves to the wedding

breakfast, and the Guvnor's best port? (*pours himself out a glass*) How dare they? It's some of them veracious cyclists. They comes a gliding in like a hinjun on the war-path, and eats as much at a meal as would keep a family down here for a fortnight. (*bell*) There's another of 'em—'orrors I calls 'em. Well, if they comes here to flirt with the barmaid, they'll find the course of true love don't run smooth even on punny-matic tyres.

*Enter EVANGELINE in cycling costume.*

EVA. Is this the Red Lion? (L.)

SPIF. Yes, miss.

EVA. Are you the landlord?

SPIF. No, miss, I'm Spiffins.

EVA. I say, Spiffins, where's the barmaid?

SPIF. I'm the barmaid.

EVA. You're a likely object for a young man to fall in love with, (*laughs*) but there's a female barmaid, isn't there?

SPIF. No, I'm everything to them now. (*goes behind bar*)

EVA. (*laughs*) Have Lord and Lady Wallerton arrived yet?

SPIF. Express is just come in, miss.

EVA. Then I'm down first. (*arranges hat at glass down R.*) I came part of the way by train, but I needn't say anything about that. (*enter PEGGY L. U. E. in summer go-away dress, gloves, etc., turning*) What, Peggy?

PEG. (*confused*) Evangeline! Who would ever have thought of seeing you here? (*they embrace C. SPIFFINS cuddles a soda water bottle and follows their conversation with interest*)

EVA. That's just what I was going to say. You have left Madame Brisson's?

PEG. Yes, the term after you did.

EVA. Lor, what fun we used to have! Why have you never written to any of us since?

PEG. I—

EVA. (*taking her round the waist and walking up and down*) Where do you live? Do you stay here long?

PEG. (*with increased confusion*) No—we leave this afternoon.

EVA. We! Are you married?

PEG. No—not exactly.

EVA. Not exactly, oh, I see, you are engaged ?

PEG. Y—yes.

EVA. Do you know this place ?

PEG. Shrove ?

EVA. No, this Inn.

PEG. Yes.

EVA. Tell me, is there a barmaid here ?

SPIF. *(makes an explosion of laughter like a soda siphon. Girls turn. He looks up at ceiling unconscious, wiping siphon or soda bottle)* Only the soda water having a lark under the counter.

PEG. *(reprovingly)* Spiffins.

SPIF. *(coming briskly from behind bar)* Yes, miss, ginger beer, lemonade, bottled ale, stout, green and yellow charterhouse.

PEG. Leave the room.

SPIF. Certainly, miss. *(aside going)* Oh, if it wasn't for Mrs. S. and the eleven kids. *(exit R.)*

EVA. Tell me, is there a barmaid here ?

PEG. She gave up her situation an hour ago.

EVA. How strange ! She left to better herself, I suppose ?

PEG. Yes.

EVA. That will be a pleasant surprise to Lord and Lady Wallerton.

PEG. Are you of their party ?

EVA. Yes. *(goes up C.)*

PEG. *(R. C. aside)* And so Eva is my rival.

EVA. There they are ! I'll go and crow over them for having got down here first. When I return you must let me introduce you. *(exit L. C.)*

PEG. What a blessing she didn't come down yesterday or the day before and found me drawing Rushton half a pint of bitter. *(shudders)* Arthur is right, it was a mistake to write to them. It's an odd wedding, but if it is to take place I mustn't keep Arthur waiting. *(exit L. U. E.)*

*Enter SNAP C., hurried and in a temper.*

SNAP. Well, if this don't beat everything ! Arter all that 'umbug about the hairress up in town, here's that old aristocrat comin' down to his son's wedding with old Stubbs' daughter, so that all that 'umbug about the dockyments and sign, sign, sign, was only a put-up job to evade the law. A man must attend his own wedding, so I'll

hang about the church till the ceremony is over, and then 'and the 'appy bridegroom this 'ere writ as a wedding present. (*going off C., voices heard, he comes down R.*) I mustn't let 'em see me or they'll warn him. Once bit, twice shy. (*exit R.*)

*Enter STUBBS ushering in LORD WALLERTON, LADY WALLERTON, and COL. RACKETT. EVA follows L. C.*

STUB. This way, my lord—this way, sir. You be humbly welcome. I got telegram and lunch will be ready by one o'clock.

LADY W. We're in time, but not a moment too soon by the look of things.

COL. (*taking up a wool boot from cradle*) If that young man is not down here arranging for his marriage, what the devil is he doing? (*up R.*)

*Enter ALFRED whistling, R.*

ALF. (*stops R. seeing arrivals*) Hullo! Good-morning, everybody. I'm sorry I couldn't stay to dinner yesterday, but—but— (*R.*)

LORD W. (C.) I demand, sir, an explanation of this letter? (*holds it out*)

ALF. Letter, what letter?

LORD W. This letter, dated yesterday from this address.

ALF. (*glancing at letter*) I didn't write that.

EVA. I told you all he didn't write it. (*down L.*)

STUB. Here, lad, what does all this mean? (*coming down C.*) EVA L., LADY WALLERTON L. C., LORD WALLERTON C., STUBBS *up a little C.*, ALFRED R. C.)

ALF. I don't know. (*goes R.*) STUBBS *goes up and to R. of table R. C.*)

LORD W. But I know your handwriting, sir.

ALF. I very much question that. (*going C.*)

LORD W. (*exasperated*) You very much question whether I—'pon my life I—I—

ALF. My dear sir, don't get in a rage about nothing.

LORD W. About nothing, sir?

ALF. I admit that I've not behaved like a gentleman.

LORD W. Oh, you do admit that? (C.)

ALF. My accompanying you to Eaton Square, was a piece of impudence for which I apologize. If I have put you to any expense (*thrusting note from pocketbook into his hand*) allow me to repay you, (*aside*) With



Arthur's money. and if you would introduce me to this charming young lady I should feel much obliged to you, as I have taken a great fancy to her (R. C.)

EVA. (L. down) Don't you try and be funny. (*walks across to him and takes his arm, and speaking, leads him off* R.) I want to have a straight talk with you. (*ex-eunt* R. EVA and ALFRED.)

LORD W. (*aghast*) The fellow amazes me. (*looking at note*)

LADY W. And me also.

STUB. (*looking off* R., *turns*) Yes, it be strange behavior for a lad as is going to marry my daughter. (*comes down* R.)

LORD W. Your daughter? (C.)

COL. Damme, sir, he's going to marry my ward. (*up* R. C.)

LADY W. Certainly (L.)

STUB. He's arranged to marry my Peggy.

LADY W. Absurd.

COL. (*coming down, up* L. of table) He signed that settlement with my ward yesterday.

STUB. But he got license for my Peggy the day afore. (COLONEL and LORD WALLERTON *go up*)

LADY W. (L.) My good man, I was to have seen the bridal dress to-day.

STUB. (*crossing to* C.) My good woman, my Peggy have got her bridal dress on, so you be too late.

LADY W. Not too late to stop this marriage.

STUB. Stop it?— (*to* LADY WALLERTON) When you was in raptures over it. When you offered to furnish a house for him and her in Park Lane, and your friends give 'em a four-in-hand, a piano with little duets for greasy fingers, and goodness knows what besides.

LADY W. What is the man talking about?

STUB. Wedding presents—he told me of 'em this morning, and now you come here wie all this unpleasantness.

LORD W. (*comes down* R.) Are you surprised at our attitude when you have allowed Mr. Arthur to live at your inn free of cost?

STUB. (*astounded*) I have? (C.)

LADY W. (L.) Yes, in order to entrap him into this marriage.

STUB. Entrap him? (*wounded*) Did you say entrap him?

LORD W. He said you never charged for anything.

STUB. He never said so—I'll swear it.

LORD W. Do you dare?

STUB. I dare anything for the sake of my good name. You mistake him and me, sir—he's always paid for everything.

LADY W. It's not true. Not only meals and sleeping accommodation, but cigars have been given him that he might be induced to stay and fall the victim to a forward and designing girl.

STUB. Stop, my lady.

LADY W. Indeed!

STUB. Aye, for th' doesn't know the lass thour't slandering or th' wouldn't wound a father's heart wie such talk. (*crosses to L. U. E.*) Peggy (*calls*) Peggy. (*LADY WALLERTON crosses down R.*) I'll let thee all look into her sweet face and see that what's said of her be *lies*, and naught but lies. (*calls*) Peggy. Gone to church and him off wie t'other wench. I wish she hadn't gone there to be disgraced and laughed at. Bring her back some of ye—tell her to come home—home to her father. If the love of an ignorant old man will comfort her I can gie her that. (*breaking down*) Thank God, I can gie her that. (*chimes, cheers heard, organ, wedding march, etc.*)

LORD W. What's all this?

COL. (*at window of R. of C.*) It's a wedding.

STUB. A wedding? (*goes up to C. looks out standing in entrance*)

LADY W. Whose wedding? Where's Arthur?

STUB. (*triumphantly*) There, where he should be—coming out of church wie my Peggy on his arm.

OMNES. What does it all mean?

STUB. (*coming in*) It means they be man and wife now, so stand back nobility, or whatever you be—no black looks to mar their happiness. Them as don't wish 'em well can leave, for they bain't welcome. (*STUBBS waves all back up stage and goes down R.*)

*Enter ARTHUR, PEGGY on his arm. YOKELS follow cheering.*

PEG. (*runs down into her father's arms*) Dad.

ART. (*taking STUBBS' hand down R. C.*) You were

TON R. C., COLONEL R., LADY WALLERTON R., *all greatly interested.*

LORD W. Now, sir, are you, or are you not my son?

ART. I have always understood so, sir. (L. C.)

*Enter PEGGY from parlor, joins her father up L.*

LORD W. Then (*suddenly offering bank note*) take back this note, you may want it before long.

ART. I never gave you that note.

LORD W. Good heavens, boy, I saw you take it from the pocket-book I gave you last month.

ART. (*amazed*) Father.

LORD W. If you deny that I don't wonder you deny writing this letter.

ART. (*looking at letter*) I don't deny writing that letter.

LORD W. Then what do you mean by making a fool of us all at Eaton Square, yesterday?

ART. I was not at Eaton Square yesterday.

LADY W. (*to LORD WALLERTON*) We've taken home the wrong one. (*speaks loudly, then converses with COLONEL up stage*)

LORD W. (*quickly*) Who is this shadow of yours who has been throwing dust in our eyes while you have been quietly getting married?

ART. My dear father, you bewilder me.

LORD W. Haven't you backed bills?

ART. Neither bills nor horses.

LORD W. Are you not now flying from justice?

ART. No, sir, rather seeking it. I have done nothing to disgrace you, not even in my marriage, and when you know my wife you will say so. (STUBBS *sends PEGGY down L.*)

LADY W. We can leave you nothing, Arthur.

ART. (*to LORD WALLERTON*) But I ask you to forgive me, not for the money, but because we have always been good friends. (C. LORD WALLERTON *turns away*)

PEG. (*crossing down to LORD WALLERTON*) Do forgive him, sir? It was all my fault. (*looking beseechingly into his face*)

LORD W. (*regarding her*) Gad, when I look at you, I can see that my boy has had great temptation, so I suppose I must. (*kisses her forehead*)

ART. Bless you, father. (*shakes his father's hand, then leads PEGGY to LADY WALLERTON, who is up L.*) Mother.

LADY W. You have called me mother, Arthur, then your wife shall be my daughter. (*LADY WALLERTON embraces PEGGY near door. ARTHUR, covered by them, exits L. U. E., they go with him and exeunt L. U. E.*)

STUB. Bravo! (*claps his hands, goes to LORD WALLERTON.*)

COL. (*going L. moodily*) That's all right, but what about my ward?

STUB. (*very heartily to keep scene up*) I hope th' won't think I've been wanting in respect, my lord?

LORD W. (*heartily*) No, Mr. Stubbs, it's all a mistake.

STUB. Not his marriage, my lord?

LORD W. No, I think not.

STUB. No, marriage is only a mistake when young people don't love each other. I own most of this place. (*LORD WALLERTON shows surprise*) I'll show thee. (*takes him up to door or window and indicates his possessions*)

*Enter SNAP R.*

SNAP. Is there a Colonel Rackett here?

COL. (L.) I am Colonel Rackett.

SNAP. (*showing cheque*) A young lady made this out in payment of my writ and told me I could ask you if it was good enough for £303:3:0.

COL. My ward's signature. (*looking at it and returning it*) they'd cash a hundred of 'em.

SNAP. A hundred? No, thank you, collecting this one's enough for me. (*raising hat*) Good-day to you, sir. (*to LORD WALLERTON and STUBBS*) Good-day, gentlemen, good-day. (*exit L. C. EVA leads ALFRED in R.*)

ALF. Have you good people settled who I am to marry?

LORD W. Marry whom the devil you please.

EVA. No, Lord Wallerton, Mr. Partridge has signed with me. Didn't you, Alfred.

COL. Alfred?

LORD W. Partridge?

ALF. Yes, sir, I am the son of Sir Wallerton Partridge of Bengal, and I believe a connection of yours. (*LORD WALLERTON talks to STUBBS*)

EVA. (*to COL.*) Alfred proposed to me before he knew I was an heiress.

COL. And as he's the right kind of Partridge you won't cease being one by marrying him—you're a lucky couple.

*Enter SPIFFINS.*

SPIF. Mr. Arthur's compliments, and will you come in to lunch? (*STUBBS waves LORD WALLERTON and COLONEL in L. U. E., SPIFFINS follows*)

EVA. I'm just famished, Alfred, I wonder what there will be at lunch?

ALF. Can't you guess?

EVA. No, what?

ALF. Why, A Brace of Partridges—allow me to offer you a wing. (*offers arm, leads her into parlor L. U. E.*)

CURTAIN.

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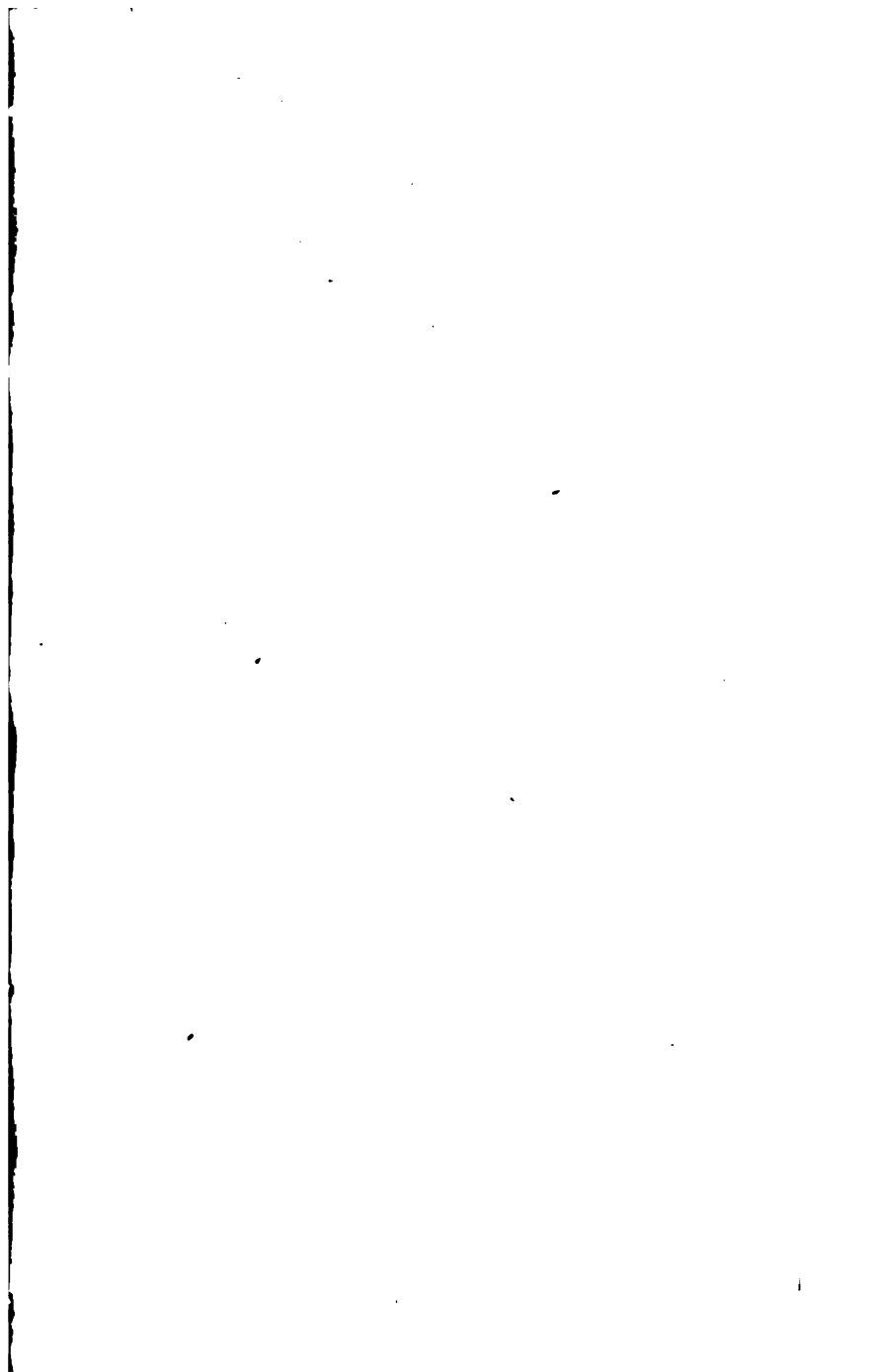
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